Cricket Fourth Test: England v South Africa

Atherton carries England's standard

Mike Selvey at Trent Bridge

IN A remarkable climax to an astoundingly good Test match, England beat South Africa by eight wickets, keeping alive hopes of winning a series that had seemed doomed, and restoring a credibility to English international cricket.

With no other distraction for the sporting public, England had to succeed and do so in style. What always promised to be a closely contested series will now go to the wire.

It was a special day. Asked to make a further 139 runs on the final day, albeit with nine wickets in hand, Mike Atherton and Nasser Hussain extended their second-wicket partnership to 152 before Hussain, after four hours at the crease, was dismissed in the first over after lunch by Allan Donald and a slip catch of the very highest class from Jacques Kallis. Hussain had played a fearless, technically first-rate innings, with five boundaries in his innings of 58.

Atherton, by this time had reached 88, and with 55 still required for victory, seemed certain to seal the issue with his 13th Test century. It was not to be. Alec Stewart, seizing the opportunity, played a dazzling cameo, making 45 from just 34 deliveries, including nine boundaries cut, driven and pulled with contemptuous ease, five from the mighty Donald. If it was meant as a statement, then it was of the loudest and most eloquent kind with which to send South Africa to Headingley next week.

It was right and proper, though, that his partner should finish the match. Three-quarters of an hour into the afternoon session, Atherton clipped Shaun Pollock through mid-on for the three runs that sealed victory and took him to a tantalising 98.

As the captains past and present crossed for the final time, they touched gloves fraternally. Then, as the ecstatic crowd swarmed over the Trent Bridge turf, Atherton removed his helmet, wiped his brow, shook hands with his opponents and, arm round Stewart's shoulder, made his way to the pavilion.

Suddenly he looked very, very weary, and no wonder. There are players who are incapable of handling pressure and there are those for whom it is the very lifeblood of their cricket. Of Englishmen, Atherton is without question the finest pressure player of his generation, and for virtually six hours he had taken everything that the South Africans in general and Donald in particular could propel at him. Donald had been superb, and his furious, adrenalin-charged spell to Atherton on Sunday will go down as Test cricket at its raw finest.

Stewart had won the toss and put South Africa in to bat. The gamble appeared to have gone wrong when the visitors ended the opening day on 302 for 7, with skipper Hansie Cronje unbeaten on 113 and looking menacingly in form. But their innings closed 72 runs later.

England made a confident start, Mark Butcher scoring 75 in just over three hours. He had shared an opening partnership of 145 with Atherton, who hit 58 before becoming Donald's first victim. Later Mark Ramprakash dug in and was undefeated on 67 when England were all out 38 runs in deficit.

However, some hostile bowling from Angus Fraser, named man of the match for Test figures of 10 for 122, and Dominic Cork swung the game firmly in England's favour to vindicate Stewart's gamble.


Finishing flourish . . . Mike Atherton (left) and Alec Stewart complete England's victory PHOTO: MAX NASH

Scoreboard

SOUTH AFRICA First Innings

G Kirsten b Gough	7
G F J Liebenberg c Stewart b Gough	13
J H Kallis c Stewart b Flintoff	47
D J Cullinan c Ramprakash b Fraser	30
W J Cronje c Hick b Fraser	126
J N Rhodes lbw b Fraser	24
S M Pollock c Stewart b Fraser	50
M V Boucher lbw b Fraser	4
S Elworthy c Ramprakkash b Gough	48
A A Donald not out	4
P R Adams c Hick b Gough	0
Extras (b9, lb3, nb9)	21
Total (103.2 overs)	374

Bowling: Gough 32.2-9-116-4; Cork 17-2-65-0; Fraser 26-7-60-5; Flintoff 17-2-52-1, Salisbury 9-1-57-0, Butcher 4-1-12-0.

ENGLAND First Innings

M A Butcher lbw b Donald	75
M A Atherton c Boucher b Donald	58
N Hussain lbw b Elworthy	22
A J Stewart c Kirsten b Kallis	19
M R Ramprakash not out	67
I D K Salisbury b Donald	23
G A Hick b Donald	6
A Flintoff c Boucher b Kallis	11
D G Cork c Boucher b Pollock	6
D Gough c Boucher b Donald	2
A R C Fraser lbw b Pollock	7
Extras (b7, lb13, w1, nb13)	34
Total (127.5 overs)	336

Bowling: Donald 33-9-109-5, Pollock 35.5-12-75-2, Elworthy 22-8-41-1, Kallis 28-9-[illegible] Adams 9-2-31-0

SOUTH AFRICA Second Innings

G Kirsten lbw b Fraser	6
G F J Liebenberg lbw b Gough	0
J H Kallis c Stewart b Cork	11
D J Cullinan c Ramprakash b Fraser	56
W J Cronje c Stewart b Cork	67
J N Rhodes c Stewart b Cork	2
S M Pollock c Stewart b Cork	7
M V Boucher c Hussain b Fraser	35
S Elworthy lbw b Fraser	10
A A Donald not out	7
P R Adams c Stewart b Fraser	1
Extras (b1, lb4, w1)	6
Total (75.4 overs)	208

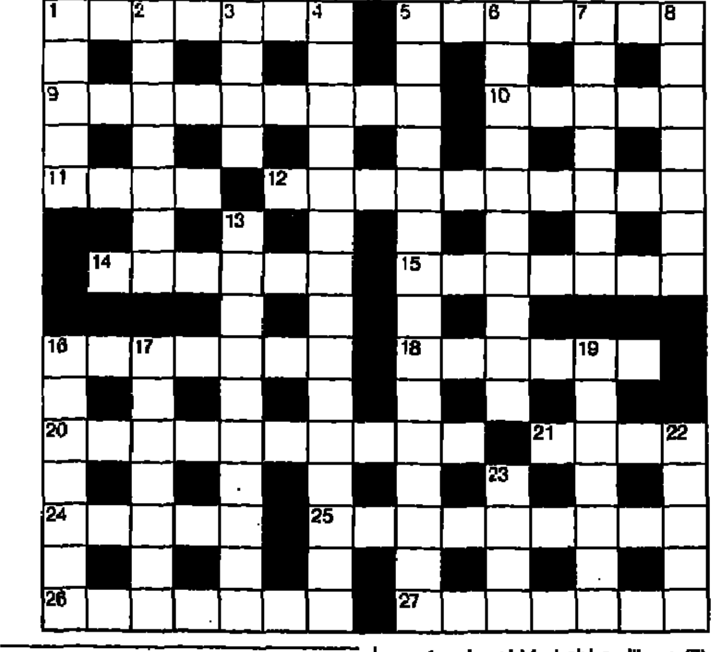
Bowling: Gough 15-4-56-1, Fraser 23-[illegible]-62-5, Cork 20-4-60-4, Flintoff 6-1-16-0, Salisbury 5-2-9-0

ENGLAND Second Innings

M A Butcher c Boucher b Pollock	22
M A Atherton not out	98
N Hussain c Kallis b Donald	58
A J Stewart not out	45
Extras (b2, lb11, w2, nb9)	24
Total (for 2, 87 overs)	247

Bowling: Donald 23-8-56-1, Pollock 26-3-79-1; Adams 12-4-23-0; Kallis 13-5-26-0 Elworthy 9-1-38-0, Cronje 4-1-12-0.

Cryptic crossword by Araucaria



Across

1 Six tricks are sickening (7)
5 Rover roving too far, or ruined friend? (4,3)
9 Book written by bachelor in company (9)
10 Partitions need replacement without bonding (6)
11 Travel from under 21 (4)
12 Rich and in debt to the cobbler? (4,6)
14 Return of some typical upper-class 4, perhaps (6)
15 Crazy actor prompting visit of Infanta (3,4)
16 Actress Rita dropped Yorkshire leader at Yorkshire village (7)
18 Physician among fish is plain in the Arctic (6)
20 Rock music with Irish student, fashionable 100 years ago (6,4)
21 Day that is without time (4)
24 River that's first among the old tales (5)
25 A romance with a petty officer where Ruth was in tears (5,4)
26 Looks a friendly message (7)
27 Special clothing to cope with the festivity one is in (7)

Down

1 4, perhaps: HM's not nobody! (5)
2 Knock to no purpose: it's fast (7)
3 Breakers for 17? (4)
4 King Satan sheers off in the garden of Eden (5,2,3,5)
5 Land register of a National Park covered with wire? (8,7)
6 Rhyming starts of 4 and 5 (10)
7 Shifty scientist from 19 with a different repetition (7)
8 Bigwig exploding grenade (7)
13 Driver created a disturbance during applause (10)
16 Comparatively healthy horse (say) entered — he wants a bit knocked off (7)
17 Belts etc recede into one side of the stage (7)
19 Bird at Communist election (7)
22 Driver with pods (5)
23 Weapons turn up in pub (4)

Last week's solution

P		S		K		Q		M		S		A		S
O	R	I	E	N	T	A	T	E		U	N	D	U	E
P		L		O		R		T		B		V		A
E	L	E	C	T	E	D		T	I	M	B	E	R	S
Y		N		S		E		L		A		R		I
E	A	C	H		U	N	D	E	R	R	A	T	E	D
T		E		C		E				I				E
H	A	R	B	O	U	R		S	U	N	D	I	A	L
E				R				H		E		M		A
S	A	T	U	R	N	A	L	I	A		O	B	A	N
A		I		U		B		V		C		E		D
I	N	S	I	P	I	D		E	T	H	I	C	A	L
L		S		T		U		R		E		I		A
O	V	U	L	E		C	O	M	P	E	L	L	E	D
R		E		D		T		E		P		E		Y

Rugby Union Tri Nations Cup: N Zealand 3 S Africa 13

Springboks' global warning

Ian Malin

IN THE 50th Test between rugby's two heavyweights in Wellington, New Zealand and South Africa once more looked worlds apart from anything the northern hemisphere has to offer. Although South Africa won the battle of the giants, they were on the back foot for much of a compelling game.

As in the last World Cup final the Springboks' victory was built around their offensive tackling. One moment epitomised the game — with the seconds ticking away Christian Cullen set off on a run deep within All Black territory, but the fullback was engulfed by a tackle by South African flanker Andrew Aitken. And every time Jonah Lomu was launched on similarly dangerous touchline runs, green limpet-like tacklers attached to his frame.

South Africa lead the Tri-Nations after their 12th successive Test victory. Last year the All Blacks had a dozen straight wins before their epic draw with England at Twickenham and looked the best side in the world. Now with those totems Sean Fitzpatrick, Zinzan Brooke and Frank Bunce consigned to history, they look vulnerable. A third successive defeat against Australia in Christchurch on Saturday would put their coach John Hart and new captain Taine Randell under enormous pressure from a disgruntled public.

The All Blacks played exhilarating 15-man rugby last year, epitomised by the counter-attacking running of Cullen. But if another moment summed up this game and their current safety-first approach it was when Cullen caught his first ball in the opening moments and chose to find touch.

The All Blacks had much the better of the forward exchanges, but their lack of creativity in midfield is a real worry. Carlos Spencer, controversially preferred to Andrew Mehrtens at fly-half, had a wretched time, missing five kicks at goal in Wellington's capricious winds. Spencer's game began to unravel alarmingly as he failed to find touch, and his usual ability to move the ball completely deserted him. Mehrtens replaced him eight minutes after half-time and 12 minutes later kicked an equalising penalty. But it was to be New Zealand's only score.

Ten minutes from time the Springboks scored a try of great skill and simplicity. From a scrum close to the All Blacks' 22, Henry Honiball popped the ball into the hands of Pieter Rossouw, who wrongfooted the New Zealand defence, and burst through unopposed to the line.

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The Washington Post Le Monde

Serbs step up 'cleansing' of Kosovo

Peter Beaumont
In the Drenica enclave

A MASSIVE campaign of ethnic cleansing of Kosovan Albanians by Serbian forces is under way, with aid workers, Western officials and journalists testifying this week to widespread destruction of villages, the shelling of civilian centres, and the burning of crops and houses by police and special forces.

The similarities to the Bosnian campaign are striking. But this is ethnic cleansing with a new twist, driven by caution as to how far the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, can go before the watching world intervenes.

This time he is using terror, rather than large-scale killing, to stampede civilians from their homes. Serbian forces are indiscriminately shelling towns and villages, then occupying them as residents flee.

Strongholds of the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) have been sealed off by the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) and Serbian police. The troops aim to stop food reaching them. In the Drenica enclave refugees driven from their villages are being pushed from pillar to post as they try to find sanctuary from Serbian tanks, artillery and rockets.

Reporters described columns of refugees riding tractor carts passing each other on narrow mountain tracks in their desperate efforts to find safety.

Heavy fighting continued in the Drenica villages on Monday. Refugees pouring over the mountains described how they had been driven from their homes by Serbian police and Yugoslav army soldiers.

In one battered car crowded with possessions, Ferat Kenjaki, aged 45, and his cousin Nezir Cuni, aged 65, from the village of Lecina Citok, said their homes and crops had been torched.

"We fled when the soldiers came," Mr Kenjaki said. "But we watched from nearby as they burnt our houses. Civilians were fleeing, but they still fired on them."

Western military analysts who have visited the region say the Serbian operation aims to clear pro-KLA villages from vast swaths of land. The Serbs want to create a "soft corridor" between areas of heavy fighting, to encourage ethnic Albanians to cross the borders into Albania and Montenegro.

One source said: "They seem determined to clear out not only KLA but everyone who supports it. They want to create a wasteland out of KLA territory."

The efforts to push out civilians have come in the third week of the offensive, which has seen the retaking of the towns of Orhovac and Malisevo.

"The Serbs are not choosing to attack military targets. They are attacking everywhere. We are in a state of war," said Sabrit Kadriu, chairman of the local human rights organisation in Drenica.

"Why is Europe shutting its eyes and not seeing the tragedy that is taking place? They have given the green light to everything the Serbs are doing. That you are witnessing this tragedy at the end of the 20th century in the centre of Europe is absurd. But we will not give up. We have nowhere else to go."

Officially the savage Serbian offensive has come to a conclusion. A smiling Mr Milosevic says so. But what Mr Milosevic says and what is happening in the sealed-off villages of Kosovo are two very different things.

Last week the Yugoslav president assured members of a European delegation that the recent military action had stopped and that he "indicated flexibility" in his meetings with the diplomats about how far he would allow self-government by the Albanian majority to go.

But behind his mincing words lies the harsh reality that his police and army have shelled more than 270 villages and forced at least 60,000 people on to the road in the offensive.

"We're on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe," said Skelzen Maliqi of the Board for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms of Kosovo Albanians. "The offensive was not meant to destroy the KLA, but to move out as much of the population as possible. The goal was ethnic cleansing."

And while Serbian forces have advanced, sending thousands of refugees into the countryside, the international community, which had threatened air strikes to protect Albanian civilians, has looked on. The Nato jets raids promised by Tony Blair as he relinquished the European Presidency have not materialised. The international community is turning a blind eye.

● A British aid worker, Sally Becker, jailed in Kosovo after trying to smuggle refugees across the Albanian border, returned to Britain last week. The Yugoslav authorities freed Ms Becker early after she staged a hunger strike.

Comment, page 12

An ethnic Albanian family flee their home near Malisevo, in Kosovo PHOTOGRAPH: OLEG POPOV

UN faces new crisis as Iraq talks collapse

Julian Borger

NEGOTIATIONS between the chief United Nations weapons inspector, Richard Butler, and Iraq collapsed on Monday amid accusations by Baghdad that UN inspections were being spun out to serve United States policy.

Amid signs of a new crisis in relations between Baghdad and the UN, Mr Butler flew back to New York from Iraq on Tuesday and was expected to brief the Security Council on Wednesday.

Mr Butler emerged from two rounds of talks on Monday and told reporters that Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, had rejected his proposal to accelerate the verification and dismantling of Baghdad's suspected weapons of mass destruction.

Mr Aziz accused Mr Butler of "serving the American policy . . . of perpetuating sanctions on Iraq" by delaying the talks on "minor issues".

The latest deadlock puts the UN and Iraq on the collision course that brought the Gulf region to the brink of war earlier this year.

The UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, averted a conflict in February with an agreement in which UN inspectors were guaranteed full access to suspected weapons sites. That agreement is now in danger of unravelling.

Economic sanctions on Iraq will only be lifted once the inspectors from the UN Special Commission declare that the country has eliminated its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programmes.

The inspectors complain that the Iraqis are continuing to conceal information about the programmes.

Washington Post, page 16

Britain seeks extradition of rogue MI5 agent

David Shayler: faces prosecution under the Official Secrets Act

Richard Norton-Taylor

THE former MI5 officer David Shayler was locked up in a Paris jail this week awaiting extradition hearings after the British government dramatically raised the stakes in its attempt to prevent him from making further disclosures about the activities of its security and intelligence services.

He was arrested last weekend, hours after Richard Tomlinson, a former officer of MI6 — the overseas intelligence agency — was arrested by French security police on an international warrant issued by the British authorities.

The extraordinary series of events unfurled as the Government confirmed that John Morris, the Attorney-General, had taken the highly risky decision to prosecute Mr Shayler for alleged breaches of the Official Secrets Act.

According to reports, Mr Shayler had been planning to publish details of an alleged MI6 plot to assassinate the Libyan leader, Colonel Muammar Gadafy.

In a booklet published last week MI5 insisted it did not kill people "or arrange their assassination". However, the Intelligence Services Act protects MI6 agents who commit acts abroad that would be illegal in Britain.

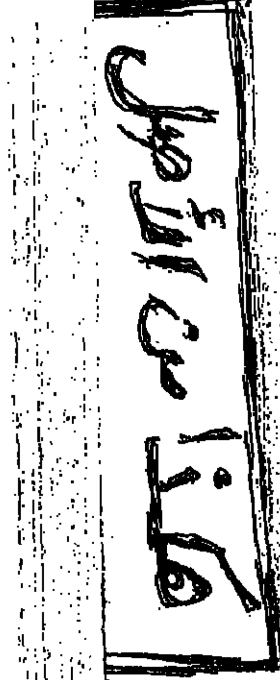
Mr Shayler, aged 32, was arrested in a Paris hotel by three plainclothes police. Mr Tomlinson was arrested last week at a different hotel. "It was like a full SAS assault," he said. "Police burst into my room, three were in the corridor, and two outside with an ambulance."

The Government has 40 days to prepare its case. Lawyers acting for Mr Shayler said they would vigorously fight his extradition under a European convention.

It emerged this week that the former MI5 officer had given further information about the alleged Gadafy plot to foreign newspapers, including Time magazine. The Government thus faces the prospect of publication abroad, with echoes of the failed attempt 12 years ago to suppress the memoirs of the former MI5 officer, Peter Wright.

Peter Preston, page 12

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 5
Denmark	DK17	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 14	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 600	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,500	Switzerland	SF 3.80



Japan made a scapegoat for global shortcomings

MANY Japanese, let down by their politicians and business people but still enjoying some of the highest living standards in the world, have decided not to waste so much of their money on unnecessary luxuries and instead wisely save for an uncertain future (Editorial, July 12). For this they are being castigated by the Western establishment and media.

What has not been discussed is the need for a drastic reappraisal of prevailing economic theory that assumes infinite growth (impossible in a finite environment), and which is inadequately measured by GDP, a better indicator of the rate precious resources are turned into garbage.

Also, the "Asian" crisis would have been less severe if Japan had not been prevented from setting up a bailout fund by the United States which backs the International Monetary Fund — "its battering ram", whose measures have exacerbated the crisis. Cronyism, a lack of transparency and bad investments certainly played their part in the crisis, but this never prevented hypocritical Western governments, which now point this out, from doing business before: note the US "engagement" with China.

Another essential issue is the need to control a parasitic global financial system that dwarfs the real productive economy and serves only the interests of a small economic élite.
Attul Setha,
Yamanouchi, Nagaro, Japan

IT IS disturbing to find visiting United States officials telling Asian governments to accept the "bitter medicine" of economic reform, or else face a further deterioration in the financial crisis. They also tend to suggest that Japan is "at the centre of the crisis" and must take remedial measures on its own to pull the Southeast Asian economies out of their depressed state.

The medicine, often the IMF's bitter pills, involves depreciating the local currency, reducing public spending, privatising and accepting bankruptcies. Depreciation of already depreciating currency adds increasingly to the real debt and debt-servicing burden of the countries concerned. The reduction in public spending and the bankruptcies increase unemployment and misery in countries already suffering from serious hardship and a real or potential breakdown of social order.

In the Asian case there is a further problem; implicitly, for the US administration, Asia is Japan's responsibility and therefore Tokyo has to act, and act alone.
(Prof) Radha Sinha,
Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan

I WAS struck by the implicit assumption underlying the treatment by Martin Woollacott of the understanding in some quarters in Asia that the genesis of their crisis lies outside their region (Asia's masses shift against the West, July 12). He appears to see that belief as somehow lacking substance. While Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamed may be using the situation to his own political advantage, it would be difficult to deny that the fundamental cause of the Asian crisis lay in the increasingly skittish behaviour of footloose, and largely Western, speculative capital. This is the same capital that caused the Mexican meltdown, the sterling crisis in 1992 and the recent drastic falls in the Australian dollar.

The truth is that it is in the direct interest of the irresponsible dealers in these capital markets for there to be substantial churning of volumes and volatility in the behaviour of prices. It is in these excesses that massive commissions and capital profits are to be made. Stable markets make for small bonuses.

Major reform of the Bretton Woods institutions and the markets that they have spawned can not be long delayed if the world is to avoid repeating the same old depressing cycle. The Asian crisis may just be the catalyst required.
Les MacDonald,
Balmain, NSW, Australia

US out of step on human rights

SO THE International Criminal Court (ICC) has become a treaty after five weeks of negotiations, five years of preparation and 50 years in the Cold War pipeline (US plans to thwart war crimes court, July 26)? The vote establishing the treaty was endorsed by 120 countries, including Britain, with seven countries opposed, including the United States, China, Russia, Pakistan and India.

We already know the position of US Senator Jesse Holmes, who has been quoted as saying that the ICC would come into effect "over his dead body", and now the US ambassador to the conference, David Scheffler, has stated that the US will actively oppose the creation of the court if it didn't get its own way — which it didn't. So once again, as with the land-mines treaty, Washington is out of step with the majority of the world in not supporting international human rights treaties.

Even without the US, the court is a flawed body. The worst offending countries will not sign up to it, and as long as they commit their crimes in their own countries there will be nothing the court can do. But at the very least there will be a court which can ensure that some individuals can now be tried for killing 100,000 people, instead of walking free.
Rob Bennett,
London

A NEW tribunal is agreed in Rome. Crimes against humanity can now be tried and those responsible punished. And yet there are restrictions and get-out clauses all over the place. US citizens can't be judged by foreigners. Using nuclear weapons is not a war crime (interesting that India said it should be), and Arab states reserve the right to use chemical and biological weapons.

The court will be useless in much of the world — one or other participant won't have signed up — and an international court isn't much use without an international police force. But how could you hope to gain agreement on such a tribunal — signing away sovereignty over your citizens and your territory — in a world of so many states?

This must be a continuing process. The tribunal must seek out cases to test its jurisdiction. It must consider cases such as Rwanda, where an attempt to deal with appalling crimes might cause the collapse of fragile civic structures. The tribunal must investigate its own potential, report on its own inadequacy.

We must hope that it can expand its reach year by year, until the day when the all-powerful will fall under the restraint of a world civilisation.
Ed Wilson,
Stockport, Manchester

Getting it all wrong on race

JOHN F BENT'S claim that there are "no indigenous doctors, scientists or engineers" in Australia is false (August 2). Pauline Hanson herself has complained that Aborigines who have become doctors have done so as a result of unfair discrimination against whites. And, contrary to Mr Bent's paranoid assertions, the Australian media have been very good to Ms Hanson; allowing her to hijack every political debate in the country. This is not, for the most part, because either journalists or editors support her hate-mongering, but because they know that it sells newspapers.

However, Mr Bent is right that Ms Hanson has been fortunate in her enemies. A lot of the criticism of her has been nothing more than sneers at her lowly origins, her lack of education, and her general vulgarity. This only increases her "Vote for me, the snobs hate me" appeal.

Not that all snobs do hate her. Your other Hanson supporter, J W Ridge, is an English-born PhD who likes Quakers and socialism. He appears convinced that these "credentials" show that he is not a racist. Unfortunately racism, and support for Ms Hanson, transcend political, educational and religious barriers.
David Coady,
New York, USA

THANK you for printing John F Bent's letter concerning Pauline Hanson's One Nation party. Although I'm not Australian, it's always good to remember what we're fighting against — especially that particularly insidious kind of racism disguised as "plain old common sense".
Julianne Denby,
Thornbury, Bradford

Eritrea is its own worst enemy

AS AN expatriate living and working in Tigray, I have been following the reporting of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea with increasing frustration and disbelief (Eritrea faces up to the Horn's Goliaths, June 21). In all the hype about "David and Goliath", and the Eritreans being the "Israelis of Africa, only nicer", certain facts seems to be getting lost.

Ethiopia has consistently offered to accept international arbitration on the border, insisting only that Eritrea withdraw from recently invaded areas. This condition, that all areas remain under previous administrations pending the outcome of arbitration, formed part of the United States/Rwanda, Organisation of African Unity and other mediation proposals, all accepted by Ethiopia but rejected by Eritrea.

It was the Ethiopian "Goliath" who fought with the Eritrea People's Liberation Front against the previous Ethiopian military dictatorship and who supported and facilitated Eritrean independence after the last war, despite opposition from its own citizens.
Fiona Meehan,
Mekalle, Tigray, Ethiopia

Briefly

CHRISTIAN KAREMBEU is not "French Polynesian", but a Kanak from the French Pacific colony of New Caledonia (July 26). One reason for France's multiracial team is the country's past — and present — as a colonial power. France still has "overseas departments and territories" in every ocean of the world. It was a great game of soccer, but let's hope the euphoria over France's "multiracial" pride doesn't overshadow ongoing French colonialism in the Pacific and the Caribbean.
Nic Maclellan,
Suva, Fiji

WHEN will your reporters and editors face up to the fact that "cutting out the genitals of young girls," is *not* circumcision (July 12)? It is torture and mutilation. To call it circumcision masks what is really going on — the total destruction of the female genitals, using an unsterilised razor or knife and without anaesthetic.
J J Forrestal,
Toronto, Canada

THIS seems to be the time for righting old wrongs (July 26). So what about giving back to the Welsh the land taken from them by the Norman barons, or to the Irish the land taken for the various Protestant "plantations", which cause trouble to this day. Even in England, is the land ownership of the landed gentry not based on the land-grab by William the Conqueror and his subsequent distribution of that land to his cronies?
Mikael Grut,
London

MARTIN KETTLE quotes a survey showing that several countries match the United States in levels of patriotic sentiment (July 5). I would be interested to know, however, whether any other country could equal the proportion of Americans who believe that the rest of the world would prefer to live in their country given the opportunity.
Eric Eales,
Kelowna, BC, Canada

THERE is a direct link between the great and the good person in the House of Lords who wishes to deprive the 16-year-old gay man of his democratic rights and the bootboy making his own undemocratic decision to bash a queer: a collusion in homophobia (August 2). I knew where my sexuality lay at the age of 13, but had to wait until I was 21 before I was no longer designated a criminal.
Noel Greig,
Brighton, East Sussex

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Letters to the Editor and other editorial correspondence to: The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. Fax: 44-171-242-0985 (UK: 0171-242 0985)
e-mail: weekly@guardian.co.uk
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More than 80 die in Kashmir border clash

M R Narayan Swamy in New Delhi and agencies

THE latest flare-up in the disputed mountain region of Kashmir has claimed more than 80 lives in five days of intense artillery fire between Indian and Pakistani troops, according to reports.

Pakistan warned last weekend that it would give a "fitting response" if Indian troops pursued separatist guerrillas into the Pakistan-ruled part of Kashmir.

In a speech to hundreds of people made homeless by the fighting at Chinari, close to the contested border, Pakistan's Kashmir affairs minister, Abdul Majid Malik, said the Indians knew that they "would get a befitting response if they tried to carry out their policy of hot pursuit".

India and Pakistan dispute ownership of Kashmir, the Himalayan state that has triggered two of the three wars since the countries gained independence in 1947. It is divided between them by the 700km line of control monitored by the United Nations. Both countries claim the whole of Kashmir.

The latest fighting follows India's announcement of a new offensive against Muslim separatists after a spate of killings in the mountainous region. Muslim rebels massacred 37 Hindu labourers in two attacks on Monday in a northern Indian state near Kashmir, officials and local news agencies said.

Police and Indian troops started searching the region around Chamba, in Himachal Pradesh state, and moved into neighbouring Kashmir in an attempt to track down the killers. It is believed they could be Islamic mercenaries, many of whom are Afghans who have made their base in inaccessible hills in Kashmir.

Himachal Pradesh is ruled by Hindu nationalists, who also govern India. Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, is ruled by a Muslim party allied to the nationalists. A separatist campaign there has claimed more than 20,000 lives since 1989.

Indian commanders denied that their latest shelling of Pakistani border positions was an attempt to scare Pakistani villagers out of sheltering infiltrators, as part of the new offensive. Exchanges of mortar and gunfire are almost a daily occurrence in Kashmir, but casualties of the magnitude of the past week are rare.

Taliban fighters with a Russian-made tank wait north of Kabul for orders PHOTOGRAPH: ZAHEERUDDIN ABDULLAH

Taliban close to total victory

Richard Galpin in Islamabad

THE Taliban militia closed in on the opposition stronghold of Mazar-i-Sharif on Monday after a string of military victories in the north of Afghanistan that has brought them tantalisingly close to their goal of controlling the whole of the country.

The Taliban-run Shariat radio said their forces were "on the threshold of [total] victory" after seizing Shebergan last Sunday, a strategic military town for the opposition, and then marching towards Mazar-i-Sharif — the headquarters of the opposition Northern Alliance and the only city in Afghanistan not under the control of the purist Islamic Taliban.

Independent sources in Mazar-i-Sharif said so far there had not been fighting nearby, but described the atmosphere as extremely tense, with civilians packing their belongings and leaving. A handful of foreign aid workers were waiting to be evacuated.

This latest Taliban offensive began with heavy fighting around Shebergan, the base for one of the most important leaders of the opposition alliance, General Abdul Rashid Dostam. By last Sunday the town had fallen to the Taliban, who said they captured huge quantities of arms and ammunition from retreating opposition forces. But between 20 and 30 opposition aircraft were set on fire and destroyed before the Taliban could take them.

Taliban sources said opposition troops had scattered and had not been able to establish any defensive positions on the road to Mazar-i-Sharif, which is about 120km east of Shebergan. An opposition spokesman said Gen Dostam had fled north to a town close to the border with Uzbekistan, where he is trying to reorganise his forces.

As in many of its previous military successes, the Taliban have been able to advance quickly thanks to the defection of local opposition commanders who, sensing the tide of events, have switched allegiance. Taliban leaders say they have not encountered much resistance so far, and that four districts close to Mazar-i-Sharif are now effectively under their control after several local warlords hoisted white flags and joined their ranks.

But Mazar-i-Sharif is also likely to come under attack simultaneously from the east. Taliban forces are reported to have broken out of their isolated pocket in Kunduz province and are now moving along the road to the city. According to unconfirmed reports on Monday, they were about 55km away.

The disparate parties of the opposition alliance say they are preparing to defend Mazar-i-Sharif against the expected Taliban onslaught. But the alliance is weak and divided. Although the city's fall is by no means a foregone conclusion, it is hard to see how the opposition can hold out against a sustained attack.

Unlike the Taliban's brief capture of Mazar-i-Sharif last year, when they were forced to retreat after intense fighting, they are much stronger this time, with supply lines and defensive positions secured.

If Mazar-i-Sharif does fall, the Taliban will have finally achieved their goal of effectively taking control of the whole of Afghanistan, two years after they marched in triumph into the capital, Kabul. There would just be a few isolated pockets of resistance led by commanders such as Ahmed Shah Massoud in the Panjshir valley, north of Kabul, and the Shia faction Hizbe Wahadat, in central Afghanistan.

Army revolt in Congo threatens Kabila

Alex Duval Smith

CONFLICTING signals were emerging on Monday about the impact of an army rebellion in which troops in the east of the former Zaire vowed to oust the 14-month-old government of President Laurent Kabila.

A three-night curfew was imposed this week in the Congo capital, Kinshasa, where sporadic fighting was reported around army barracks.

In Bukavu, Kindu and Goma, in the eastern south Kivu region, border posts with Rwanda were closed as ethnic Banyamulenge troops reportedly clashed with soldiers loyal to the president.

The rebellion is the most concerted action so far against President Kabila, who has faced mounting criticism since he came to power last May after a seven-month campaign against the late dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko.

That insurgency started in the east of the central African country where fighters from among the persecuted Banyamulenge rebelled against Mobutu in October 1996. They were supported by Tutsi-dominated troops from Rwanda who wanted to secure their borders against Rwandan Hutu rebels infiltrating from Zaire.

On radio stations in Bukavu and Goma, army commanders urged Congolese to rise against President Kabila, accusing him of corruption. "We, the army of the Congo, have taken the decision to remove President Kabila from power," said a statement on the Goma-based Voice of the People.

In Kinshasa, officials accused Rwanda of fomenting the unrest, and there were reports that the defence ministry had ordered loyalist troops to kill Tutsi "agents" hiding in Kinshasa.

In the past few weeks President Kabila's government has countered claims that it is doing too little to improve the lot of the Congolese, with allegations that Rwandan Tutsis and Banyamulenge have been plotting against the regime.

Last week the finance minister, Fernand Tala Ngai, was imprisoned for 24 hours during a visit by International Monetary Fund officials. "I was questioned about rumours of a *putsch*," he said after his release.

Last month President Kabila sacked James Kabari, a Rwandan Tutsi who had been his top military commander, and ordered tanks to be deployed in front of the presidential residence.

On Monday, the Kinshasa-based People's Radio urged Congolese and foreigners "to stay calm and to stay at home until the armed forces re-establish civil order".

In Rwanda a government spokesman denied that its troops were involved in the rebellion, saying they had all left the Congo last week. But he admitted that their leaving could have played a role in the unrest. "The departure of our troops from Congo may have removed the control that they had, so that the conflict and the difference [among ethnic groups] could surface."

The Week

THE Sudanese government declared a unilateral ceasefire throughout the south of the country, where a 15-year war with insurgents has aggravated a famine. Washington Post, page 16

JOSE Barrionuevo, a former Socialist interior minister, and his deputy, Rafael Vera, were sentenced to 10 years in prison for their part in the so-called dirty war against the Basque separatist group ETA.
Comment, page 12
Le Monde, page 13

YEMEN approved a law introducing the death penalty for kidnapping, in an attempt to curb tribesmen who abduct foreigners as a way of bringing pressure on the government for better services and more money.

A US military court has set dates for the separate trials of two marine officers who flew the jet that severed a ski-lift cable in the Italian Alps in February, plunging 20 people to their deaths.

BEIJING'S disgraced Communist party chief and mayor, Chen Xitong, was jailed for 16 years for his role in a multi-million dollar corruption scandal.

THE war crimes tribunal in The Hague is to launch an inquiry after Milan Kovacevic, a Bosnian Serb aged 57, died in his cell. He was the only suspect on trial for genocide — and the second detained person to die in just over a month.

A STRIKE that paralysed General Motors for two months is winding down as the United Auto Workers union announced a tentative agreement in a dispute that has cost $2.3 billion.
Washington Post, page 16

THE YEN fell to its weakest level in almost two months as speculators probed the determination of Keizo Obuchi's new government to defend the Japanese currency.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates August 3	Sterling rates July 27
Australia	2.6963-2.6998	2.7121-2.7158
Austria	20.39-20.40	20.76-20.77
Belgium	59.74-59.84	60.81-60.89
Canada	2.4590-2.4610	2.4881-2.4903
Denmark	11.04-11.05	11.24-11.25
France	9.71-9.72	9.88-9.89
Germany	2.8903-2.9005	2.9497-2.9522
Hong Kong	12.58-12.59	12.82-12.83
Ireland	1.1565-1.1585	1.1728-1.1745
Italy	2,859-2,861	2,908-2,911
Japan	236.65-236.93	235.33-235.62
Netherlands	3.2675-3.2708	3.3260-3.3288
New Zealand	3.1884-3.1944	3.2221-3.2295
Norway	12.33-12.35	12.47-12.48
Portugal	296.53-296.92	301.72-301.97
Spain	246.07-246.36	250.28-250.50
Sweden	12.96-12.99	13.03-13.06
Switzerland	2.4376-2.4402	2.4772-2.4802
USA	1.6245-1.6253	1.6552-1.6561
ECU	1.4713-1.4729	1.4927-1.4953

FTSE100 Share Index down 20.4 at 5509.7. FTSE 250 Index down 49.5 at 5447.3. Gold down $5.50 at $284.75.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Suu Kyi prepares for army showdown

David Harrison

THE soldiers went in swiftly but, for once, not brutally. They pulled open the door of the white sedan parked on a bridge 30km from Rangoon, forced Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of Burma's opposition, into the passenger seat and drove her back to the capital.

The car had been on the bridge for six days, ever since the army blocked Ms Suu Kyi's attempt to drive 160km west to Pathein to meet political allies. The image of Ms Suu Kyi standing beside the car went around the world and brought Burma's plight back to public consciousness.

Ms Suu Kyi refused to budge and stayed put for five nights, with little food and water but with great determination. But, fearful of the attention she was attracting at home and abroad, the troops moved in and took her back to Rangoon.

The armed might of one of the most ruthless regimes in the world had been marshalled against the 53-year-old Nobel peace laureate to stop her talking with political allies.

She is not yet well enough to play the piano, the sound of which reassures her many dedicated, but often nervous, followers in a country where the merest criticism of the military regime can mean 10 years in jail: torture, extra-judicial killings, child and slave labour are rife; ethnic minorities are beaten and forced out of their homes; and rape is a form of recreation for soldiers and an instrument of oppression and ethnic cleansing.

Ms Suu Kyi is used to her movements being curbed. The army stopped her travelling outside the capital three times in July. She has been allowed to leave the city only once — to visit a Buddhist monk in the eastern city of Pa-an — since her release from six years of official house arrest in July 1995. "Release" is a loose term in the junta's lexicon.

Western diplomats in Rangoon fear her movements will be further restricted after the incident at the bridge. The entrance to University Avenue, where she lives, has already been sealed off, and 100 supporters were refused permission to visit her after her return last week.

Ms Suu Kyi's presence will be important on two highly sensitive dates this month. Saturday marks the 10th anniversary of the 1988 pro-democracy student uprising. Burmese troops crushed the peaceful protest, killing scores of demonstrators. It was Burma's Tiananmen Square — a year before the terrifying scenes in Beijing — and was largely ignored by the world's media.

The other date is August 21, the deadline set by her party for a parliament of representatives elected in May 1990 to be convened. The National League for Democracy took 80 per cent of the vote, but the junta decided democracy was only good when it kept it in power, and ignored the election.

There are already signs of tension. "The pot is boiling in Myanmar [Burma]," said one diplomat. "There could well be more stand-offs, and we know how the army reacts to demonstrations."

There is a third important date. On August 18 the higher education institutions — closed after widespread student unrest in December 1996 — will be reopened and more than 100,000 students are due to take their examinations.

The ruling State Peace and Development Council — formerly the State Law and Order Restoration Council — chaired by General Than Shwe, has rejected the demand to convene parliament and says a new constitution must be drafted first.

The New Light of Myanmar newspaper accused Ms Suu Kyi of being paid by Britain and the United States to destroy the country with her campaigns. It said it would not meet her demand for freedom to exercise political rights until the state's 135 ethnic groups were more unified and the people's basic needs were met.

The US, Britain and Japan have condemned the Rangoon government. Malaysia's Democratic Action party urged all Southeast Asian states to do the same. Last week the US and Australia asked the United Nations secretary-general, Kofi Annan, to press Burma to open talks with Ms Suu Kyi.



Suu Kyi: defying the regime

Some Western observers believe the West is treating Burma unfairly because it has much less investment there, and therefore little to lose by condemning human rights violations.

"America attacks Burma but gives China most favoured nation trading status," said a former Burma human rights activist. "Yet China's human rights record is appalling. There is a lot of hypocrisy in this." — *The Observer*

Nuon Paet, a notoriously brutal Khmer Rouge warlord, under arrest last weekend. Cambodia's second prime minister, Hun Sen, who is claiming victory in last month's election, presented the capture as a triumph for the police, but experienced observers were sceptical. *Washington Post, page 15* PHOTO: SEK VANNAK

Angola rebels provoke crisis in diamond trade

Dan Atkinson in Antwerp

THE spectre of a worldwide crash in gemstone prices loomed this week as it emerged that up to 6 per cent of all diamonds are in the hands of Angola's rebel Unita movement, according to a confidential briefing given to European Union leaders.

This is much higher than previous estimates and, if correct, makes a mockery of suggestions that Unita has been losing its grip on valuable diamond-mining areas in the country.

The estimates help to explain the EU's tough decision last week to slap new sanctions on Unita, with special reference to diamonds. The level of smuggling currently under way is allowing the movement to rearm and to recruit fresh troops in preparation for an expected resumption of hostilities in the near future.

Not only is the figure of $360 million proof of a smuggling bonanza out of Angola to European centres such as Antwerp. It also casts a cloud over figures due later this month from the mining giant De Beers, whose cartel seeks to smooth out fluctuations in the gem market and to keep diamond prices high.

De Beers is in a quandary in the wake of the EU's sanctions decision. As an operator within the union it is bound not to accept any stones from Angola that are not certified by the recognised government. This ties its hands in operations to mop up illicit or smuggled diamonds, given that it is not allowed to touch contraband Unita gems.

A spokeswoman confirmed last week that De Beers would not buy any Angolan diamonds that did not carry the appropriate paperwork.

Meanwhile smugglers are shifting huge quantities of the stones out of the Unita area in northern Angola. Some are transported to Namibia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), and even South Africa, where it is possible for them to be falsely relabelled as having originated in those countries.

Others are moved direct to Europe, where they are often traded in backstreet cafés or even on the pavements of Antwerp and London. Angola is on some measures the world's third largest diamond producer, and the quality of its stones is excellent.

News of the enormous scale of Unita's illicit diamond trading operation came as the United Nations was desperately trying to keep the two sides apart in Angola. A five-day peace mission began last week.

One of the few rays of light for international peacemakers has been the hope that Unita, having ceded some diamond areas and having been pushed out of some others, was losing its ability to trade diamonds for cash that could be converted into weapons of war. Now it seems that hope was misplaced.

Last week's EU move followed an alleged massacre committed by Unita troops. Initially, the Brussels decision surprised observers. It was a unilateral action taken apart from existing sanctions in place since 1993 and supported by the UN and the United States, and it came at a time when President Clinton's government was reported to be "re-calibrating" its foreign policy to rely less on punitive embargoes of this sort.

A spokesman in Brussels confirmed that enforcement of the blockade was a matter for individual member states. Given Antwerp's role as the hub of all European diamond trading, this puts additional strain on Belgium's law-enforcement community.

The prospect of a wholesale collapse in the diamond price could send shockwaves around the world. Not only will jewellers and other players in the business suffer, but those who had counted diamond jewellery as among their most precious assets would see them lose value sharply.

Only if the EU sanctions keep the illicit stones off the market does there seem to be any prospect of stabilising diamond prices in the near future.

Fisherman find bodies off Indonesia's coast

John Aglionby in Jakarta

IN RECENT days Papua New Guinean fisherman living on the border with the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya have caught the corpses of tidal wave victims in their nets. The petrified people are refusing to go to sea until all the bodies are recovered.

And 650km west, Irianese fishermen sailing near the island of Biak have also been hauling in bodies. But these are no victims of Papua New Guinea's natural disaster.

Two bodies were netted on July 9. They had holes in their heads. Then eight days later, four others were found, bound together with their wrists tied. They were handed over to the military and have not been seen since. Last week 15 more bodies washed up on five different beaches near Biak.

At least one of the corpses has been identified as that of one of 31 people who disappeared on July 6 after the Indonesian army attacked 200 people who had raised the separatist flag of "West Papua" above a Biak water tower on July 1 and refused to take it down.

The local police commander, Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Rori, said that the dead might be victims of the waves or might have come from a ship that sank off the north coast of Irian Jaya on July 16.

The Roman Catholic bishop of Irian Jaya, Leo Laba Ladjar, has been quoted by local newspapers as disbelieving the police theory.

One investigator has dismissed as "quite ridiculous" the notion that bodies from Papua New Guinea could be swept 650km. He said the ship theory did not account for the first bodies found.

The army at first said no one had died in the attack on the separatist post on Biak but later revised this to one demonstrator, Ruben Orboi, whose body was identified. Major General Amir Sembiring, the military commander for Irian Jaya, said the body had been buried on the beach — without the Orboi family being informed — and must have been carried out to sea by the tide.

But when pressed about the bodies found by the fishermen, Gen Sembiring said the Biak death toll was six, although he refused to give details. He said the soldiers would have shot "thousands" if they had had to "because what they [the protesters] were doing was treason".

A student demonstrator, aged 18, has said that while he was in detention on the night of the attack he witnessed about 10 people being shot by firing squad. All local military and civilian administration sources have denied this took place.

Local church leaders are preparing a report on the deaths, but the Red Cross has been denied permission to visit the island and banned from Irian Jaya.

Above all, according to foreign observers, military commanders fear their human rights record in the separatist hotbeds of Irian Jaya is about to be exposed by Indonesia's human rights commission and the World Council of Churches.

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'Non-lethal' weapons targeted

Liesl Graz and Shyam Bhatia in Geneva

THE Red Cross, which spearheaded the international campaign against land-mines, has turned its attention to controlling the spread of so-called "non-lethal" weapons which, despite their name, can kill or permanently incapacitate.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has convened an expert group (the SirUs project) to study the impact of weapons that scramble minds, "cook" organs, cause uncontrollable dizziness, nausea and defecation, or paralyse adversaries by tangling them in nets and sticking them in place.

Foam guns have been developed that pin targets to the ground; United States Marines experimented with sticky ooze in Somalia. A leading expert on the non-lethal weapons issue, British surgeon Robin Coupland, says the legal, strategic and medical implications of the new weapons need to be examined before they are deployed.

One US-based group, Scientific Applications and Research Associates (Sara), has been building an acoustic device to make internal organs resonate. Currently undergoing trials by US Marines, it protects high-security buildings by inducing sea sickness in would-be intruders.

Scientists have discovered that very low sound frequencies, which cause vibrations in the inner ear, can have a startling effect on human beings. Extreme nausea and involuntary defecation are common.

Arms control experts were taken by surprise when a Swedish arms manufacturer — FOA — recently publicised a stun gun that is being tried out by the Swedish army at the same time that manufacturers have been promoting it as a riot control agent. Stunning weapons are designed literally to hit with physical force. Some use massive sound waves, others beam electric shocks.

Some of the latest weapons now being developed in laboratories use embrittling or corrosive agents that can be sprayed on to military equipment from an aircraft. The idea is to destroy enemy infrastructure, but the implication for human beings caught in the shower can also be lethal.

Next on the list are chemical foams that act as a glue, immobilising and sticking a victim down to the ground. This could be fatal if it glues the victim's mouth shut or obstructs the nasal passages. Then there are anti-traction lubricants meant to prevent aircraft from taking off or landing, but which also immobilise pedestrians and prevent medics from getting to the wounded.

Blinding lasers have been banned, but other optical weapons are being developed. They include pulsed strobe lights for disorientation, or mixed-intensity lights for producing temporary blindness.

"The weaponry is always ahead of the legal system," says Professor Malcolm Dando of Bradford university. He adds that non-lethals have managed to sidestep existing conventions that ban chemical and biological weapons.

"The problem is that whenever a new set of weaponry gets out of control we take time and energy to bring it back . . . we need to examine each case very carefully and make sure we are not opening up new dangers."

There are other concerns too. Most theorists of military doctrine say non-lethal weapons will never be used in isolation. "They will always be used with lethal weapons behind them," says Colonel John Alexander, a consultant to the US department of defence.

"If they genuinely produce incapacitation with zero casualties," says Mr Coupland, "that raises questions about military strategy and the problem of softening up targets."

Senior US commanders have questioned the risks of issuing troops with non-lethal weapons and wonder how their soldiers will react when they have to revert to traditional combat. Lieutenant-Colonel Dave Grossman, the US author of On Killing, says non-lethal weapons could change "the whole business of posturing in conflict . . . Why not be violent, or why not goad an adversary to violence, if the result is not lethal?" — *The Observer*

UK bans land-mines, page 10

Iran paper bounces back

David Hirst in Beirut

A NEW and successful newspaper took centre stage last week in the power struggle in Iran between the president, Mohammed Khatami, and his arch-conservative rivals. Banned last month, Jameah (Society) promptly appeared under a second name. Banned again last week, it emerged under a third.

This act of defiance has added venom to a conflict constantly erupting in new forms. No sooner do the conservatives, headed by their spiritual guide, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, strike a blow at the moderates than the moderates mount a new challenge.

The fear is that a confrontation will turn into the fundamental showdown that both sides still appear anxious to avoid. The hardliners are once again making use of the Ansar e-Hizbollah, street gangs masquerading as enforcers of Islamic morality; but students and other Khatami supporters are replying in kind.

Jameah's editor, Mahmoud Shams, said: "What is dangerous is that the fate of Mr Khatami's government will be determined in the streets, where militants are taking the law into their own hands."

The newly licensed newspaper — Aftab e-Emrouz (Today's Sun) — led with an account of an attack by the Ansar e-Hizbollah on the paper's premises last week, in which Mr Shams was punched.

The fate of Jameah goes to the heart of the power struggle. For the moderates, its closure would be an assault on the greatly expanded freedoms; for the conservatives, its publication amounts to an intolerable affront to their power and prestige.

The conservative judiciary, in seeking to suppress Jameah, accused it of publishing false reports and disturbing order. But the ministry of Islamic guidance, headed by a Khatami ally, opposed the ban, urging the judiciary to reconsider.

Jameah was an instant success when it appeared in March. Within 100 days it had a readership of 300,000. Last week it raised the stakes, drawing Mr Khatami directly into the fray. A headline quoted him as saying: "Those who oppose freedom in the name of the religion are the enemies of the people."

Another paper, Khaneh, recently published a letter from a woman criticising the late Ayatollah Khomeini. "Do you want me to follow someone who transformed Iran into an international terrorist state with his order to murder Salman Rushdie?" she asked. Last week its editor, Mohammed-Reza Za'eri, was arrested.



Clinton's week of living dangerously

WASHINGTON DIARY
Mark Tran

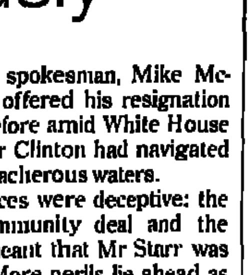
AS BILL CLINTON'S motorcade rolled past the Washington federal courthouse last week where Kenneth Starr is investigating the Monica Lewinsky scandal, presidential dignity and tawdry scandal were briefly juxtaposed.

Mr Clinton and his entourage were making their way to Capitol Hill for a memorial service for two policemen killed there by a gunman last month. In the cool rotunda of the Capitol building, before two coffins draped with the Stars and Stripes, the president made a short, moving tribute. It was Mr Clinton at his best, acting as a conduit for national grief and giving eloquent voice to a saddened country.

Yet, while he was performing his duties of state, he was being pursued once more by Mr Starr, the tenacious independent counsel whose investigation of the Clintons has dragged on for four years. That day, David Kendall, the president's lawyer and friend, had phoned Mr Clinton with the news that Ms Lewinsky, a former White House intern, had reached an agreement for blanket immunity from prosecution in exchange for revealing an alleged sexual relationship with the president. The immunity also covered her mother, Marcia Lewis.

Mr Clinton was also mulling over a subpoena from Mr Starr requiring him to testify before the grand jury hearing evidence on the alleged affair. No sitting president had ever been confronted with such a writ.

Mr Kendall's call, on top of the subpoena, shattered any semblance of calm in the White House. The



presidential spokesman, Mike McCurry, had offered his resignation the week before amid White House spin that Mr Clinton had navigated the most treacherous waters.

Appearances were deceptive: the Lewinsky immunity deal and the subpoena meant that Mr Starr was closing in. More perils lie ahead as the White House awaits Ms Lewinsky's testimony, probably this week, and then Mr Clinton's own showdown with Mr Starr's investigators.

And, in case the president needed any reminder of the potential pitfalls, lawyers for Paula Jones began an attempt to reinstate her sexual harassment case against him. Her suit, dismissed in April, alleged that Mr Clinton made a sexual overture to her at an Arkansas hotel in 1991 when he was state governor.

Her lawyers said in their application to an appeal court that the judge had misapplied relevant law and misinterpreted facts.

The Lewinsky immunity deal kicked off a week of furious activity. Washington normally winds down at the end of July; instead, a sense of heightened anticipation hangs over the city as it waits for developments to unfold, events that could determine the president's fate.

The deal was struck after five hours of top secret talks. Three lawyers from Mr Starr's office, Ms Lewinsky and her lawyers, Plato Cacheris and Jacob Stein, attended. And Ms Lewinsky had a present for Mr Starr: physical evidence that was supposed to back up her claim of a sexual liaison with Mr Clinton.

According to leaks, presumably from Mr Starr's office, this evidence includes the famous "semen-stained" blue cocktail dress which could, after DNA tests, provide a



link with Mr Clinton. Ms Lewinsky was also said to have handed over answering machine tapes with messages from the president.

Mr Starr and Mr Kendall held secret talks on the ground-rules for Mr Clinton's testimony. He had received his subpoena last month. Combined with the Lewinsky immunity agreement it formed a pincer movement that left him with little choice but to tell his own side of the story.

Ms Lewinsky was ready to tell prosecutors that she and Mr Clinton had sex, but that he did not direct her to lie about it. She would, however, testify that they discussed "cover stories" to conceal the alleged relationship.

But in one positive development for the White House, they were off the hook on three pages of "talking points". These were the famous crib-sheets presented to Linda Tripp — the woman who secretly taped 17 hours of conversation with Ms Lewinsky — before she was about to testify in the Jones case. The talking points suggested how Ms Tripp would shade her testimony on Mr Clinton's alleged groping of Kathleen Willey, a White House volunteer.

Mr Starr's office had leaked its suspicions that Mr Clinton's friend and top aide, Bruce Lindsey, was responsible for the talking points. But Ms Lewinsky said last week that she wrote them with some suggestions from Ms Tripp — although some suspect her mother's hand.

Mr McCurry had bobbed and weaved as he was bombarded with more than 120 questions from reporters about the investigation and how the president would respond to Mr Starr's subpoena. He gave nothing away.

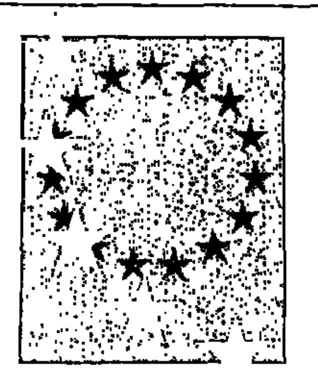
Then the White House gave the Washington press corps the answer it had been waiting for on Mr Clinton's subpoena. Mr Kendall told reporters that the president would testify voluntarily, rendering the subpoena redundant.

In a risky legal move, Mr Clinton and his lawyers will face Mr Starr's investigators on August 17 at the White House. The session will be videotaped, with a live link-up to the grand jury. Questions will be confined to the Lewinsky investigation.

Mr Clinton's decision to come out fighting lifted spirits at the White House. "The level of confidence is quite high, surprisingly so," said one Democrat operative. Or, as one Washington insider put it: "Clinton is at his best when he is in deepest doo-doo." And, once again, matters of state jostled with scandal.

Comment, page 12
Washington Post, page 15

Reeperbahn reflects Continental drift



Europe this week

Martin Walker

THE Reeperbahn in the German port city of Hamburg, perhaps the most notorious red light district in Europe since the 1950s, has often been a useful clue to broader social developments. It was the first place outside Liverpool to appreciate the talents of a young British rock band called the Beatles. Its transformation from a bunch of sailors' bars and brothels into a garish and neon-lit showcase of the sex trade, foreshadowed developments in Amsterdam and elsewhere.

Now something altogether different is happening in the Reeperbahn. Refugees have become more profitable than sex. Brothels are being refashioned into hostels. The whores' rooms have been stuffed with bunk-beds for Bosnians, Albanians, Kurds and other tragic human flotsam of the day, largely because the generous German social system forks out the equivalent of $500 a month per person to the hostels. The owners of the Eros Centre, Der Spiegel reported last week, coin a tidy $250,000 a month this way.

The Social Democrat leader, Gerhard Schröder, condemned the grim living conditions of the refugees, but echoed the conservatives' demand that any immigrant convicted of crime should be deported. Then Theo Waigel, the finance minister and head of the Bavarian CSU party, upped the stakes with a demand to "limit the flow of newcomers". The Bavarian government has formally proposed an amendment to the Aliens Law that would expel the parents of "delinquents" as well as the offenders.

It was not just the sex connection that inspired German politicians to haul the refugee question into their election campaigns last week. Riots in southern Italy, in the new refugee centre at Lampedusa, showed that the country's tough new asylum control system was working disturbingly well.

Italy had been something of a soft touch for asylum seekers, who were released into the community when they appealed against an immigration officer's ruling that they were not genuine — on their honour to turn up for a later hearing. Most took advantage of Europe's new open frontiers to head for Austria, Germany and other European countries. Italy's neighbours insisted that if the Schengen treaty on scrapping Europe's internal borders were to endure, the Italians would have to toughen their procedures and detain illegal immigrants pending deportation.

The European Union is considering making money available to help Turkey establish "reception centres" which, given Turkey's human rights record, may look rather more like internment camps to prevent the asylum seekers reaching western Europe. Turkey's conditions for acceptance included a pledge that the camps would not allow any role for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Britain, which cites its island status as reason enough to stay outside the Schengen system, has just produced a White Paper on its plans to toughen the system for new entrants, which include denying them welfare benefits once in the UK. And while there seems to be an amnesty in the works for those who have stayed in Britain illegally for a long time, the main thrust of the new policy seems to be to keep the problem away from British shores by increasing the role of visa officers in UK embassies overseas.

Whether it be the votes for the National Front in France, or the noisy anti-immigrant party in this year's Danish elections, or the Belgian police sweeps through immigrant areas looking for suspected Islamic militants, one of Europe's most striking common concerns this year has been immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. This is politically understandable, given the role it has been playing in elections from France to Denmark to Germany. But it could be self-defeating.

The main reason is demography. Europeans have stopped breeding. Smaller families, later marriages and the focus of increasing numbers of women on their careers presage a population revolution in Europe, where no country has a birth rate that can sustain current population levels. Even Catholic Ireland has dropped below the replacement rate, with an average of 1.9 children per woman. Only a decade ago Irish women averaged 2.5 children. And the average age at which an Irish woman now has her first child is 30, one of the highest in the EU.

The average European woman today has 1.44 children, with Spain the lowest at 1.15, followed by Italy at 1.22. If birth rates continue at this low level native populations could practically halve over the next generation. As it is, Europe's home-grown population is shrinking at an annual rate of 1.2 per cent. Governments are already fretting at the implications of these trends for the costs of pensions and health care — social systems will be caring for many more pensioners when there are fewer people of working age available to pay the essential taxes.

There is a bright note, however. Despite the declining birth rates, Europe's total population is growing by 0.8 per cent a year, thanks to immigration. Eurostat, the EU's statistical arm, this year produced some detailed figures on immigration. In a population of 370 million, the EU plays host to roughly 12 million immigrants. About 5 million come from other Mediterranean countries. Turks head the list, with more than 2 million, most of whom live in Germany. They are followed by Moroccans and Algerians, who mainly live in France. Another 3 million immigrants come from eastern Europe and the Balkans. About 1.5 million come from Asia, most of whom live in Britain. Africans total just under 1 million, and Americans (North and South) total more than 700,000.

Not only do immigrants swell the population, but they tend to have more children too. The current concern about keeping immigrants out of Europe may change swiftly when voters start to consider their economic importance as workers, consumers and taxpayers able to keep ageing Europeans in the style to which they have grown accustomed. And since by then most Europeans will be too old for the traditional attractions of the Reeperbahn, it is probably just as well that the old red light district is not what it was.

'Dr Death' tells of SA germ warfare

Alex Duval Smith in Cape Town

BRITISH scientists advised South Africa on the setting up of a biological warfare programme at the height of the apartheid era, Wouter Basson, the head of the regime's chemical warfare programme, said last week.

Dr Basson, aged 47, a heart specialist whose team of scientists created poisons, confirmed to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Cape Town that British, United States, German, Japanese and Canadian experts had told him about their biological warfare programmes "in incredible detail".

Reluctantly answering questions after two days of legal manoeuvres before the commission's mandate for human rights hearings expired, Dr Basson, known as "Dr Death", gave few details.

But the commission's legal adviser, Hanif Vally, distributed a handwritten memorandum, stamped "top secret", giving details of a 1981 conference in Texas with Western army officers. Dr Basson said Western governments had co-operated with South Africa in return for information about chemical weapons in Soviet-backed African countries.

He was "pushing at open doors" when he toured the world in the early 1980s, gathering information: "I had access to very senior people."

Dr Basson was questioned about reports that his team had produced cyanide-laced peppermint chocolates and anthrax-tipped cigarettes. He said that the chocolates had been intended as training tools. "These were not weapons of mass destruction," he said.

The sweets had been given to laboratory animals. "There is no better way for a person to learn to avoid making a mistake than to see the substance tested in front of them."

Mr Vally read out a list of about 20 other toxins, including whisky mixed with paraquat, mamba venom, poisonous spoors on the gum of envelopes, deodorant contaminated with typhoid, and cholera cultures. Dr Basson confirmed they had all been produced by his team.

They had been used only "for legitimate training and research purposes", he insisted. He denied that cholera cultures produced by his team had been used to spread the disease in South Africa and other African countries.

In June scientists who worked for Dr Basson described spreading cholera and plotting to poison Nelson Mandela when he was in prison. Dr Basson said he had actually helped to save President Mandela's life.

Army chiefs had warned him in the mid-1980s of a plot by radicals in the African National Congress to kill Mr Mandela because he was too moderate, Dr Basson said. To thwart the plan, he had ordered a team to look at ways of attacking Mr Mandela, and another to look at ways to protect him. Their finding helped to boost security.

Dr Basson denied other allegations made by his former colleagues at their amnesty hearings. Among them was a charge that he had authorised his scientists to develop ways of reducing black women's fertility, and to do research on a bacteria to kill black people.

The doctor, whose lawyers are being paid by the armed forces, faces trial this month on 11 charges of fraud and manufacturing anthrax and Ecstasy tablets. He had claimed that giving evidence before the truth commission could prejudice that trial.

Comment, page 12

Chess crisis after murder in Kalmykia

James Meek in Moscow

THE murder of a campaigning journalist has plunged the world of international chess into crisis only weeks before more than 1,000 international players gather in a dusty steppe region of southern Russia for the 1998 Chess Olympics.

A coalition of Russian civil rights organisations has appealed to national chess federations not to send teams to the Olympics, due to be held next month in Kalmykia, a semi-desert territory on the shores of the Caspian Sea ruled over by Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, who is also the head of the main world chess body, Fide.

The journalist, Larissa Yudina, editor of the only opposition newspaper in Kalmykia, was murdered in June. Her paper had been consistently critical of Mr Ilyumzhinov, accusing him of corruption and incompetence on a massive scale.

In turn he persecuted Yudina, forcing her to print the paper in another part of Russia. One of the men arrested and charged with the murder was a former Ilyumzhinov aide.

The appeal, signed by 14 of Russia's most prominent civil rights campaigners, said that the newly built "Chess City" in the Kalmyk capital, Elista, where Olympic players and officials will stay during the tournament, had been built with Russian government money intended for social security and for investment in the industry and agriculture of the desperately poor region.

"When you look out of the windows of Chess City to the nearby Amber Pond, you should know that several months ago, in this very pond, the mutilated body of the editor of Kalmykia's only opposition newspaper was found," the appeal said.

Mr Ilyumzhinov, first elected in 1993, held fresh elections in 1996 which were illegal under the Russian constitution. No action has been taken against him by the Kremlin, grateful for stability in the republic and for Mr Ilyumzhinov's ability to deliver votes when necessary, and fearful of a new Chechenia among the historically Buddhist, ethnically non-Slavic Kalmyks.



The Week in Britain James Lewis

Defendants likely to lose right to choose jury trial

THE right to allow defendants to elect trial by jury could be abolished under plans that have won the support of the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, who strongly opposed any such change when Labour was in opposition.

The accused's right to opt for trial by jury covers a wide range of middle-ranking offences, such as theft, handling stolen goods and indecent assault, some of which may be minor but impugn the accused's reputation for honesty. If the change goes ahead, such offences will automatically be heard by magistrates.

The Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, openly admits that his aim is to save money. The average cost of a jury trial is estimated to be £13,500, compared with £2,500 in the magistrates' courts.

The Bar Council, representing barristers who work in the higher courts where jury trials are held, reiterated its criticism of the reform, saying it was a "back-door removal of jury trial". The Home Office conceded that its research showed that a major reason for opting for jury trial was the belief of defendants that magistrates "are on the side of the police".

Magistrates are chosen secretly from "the great and the good" and are therefore considered to be the kind of "right-thinking" people who otherwise exist only in the minds of legal draughtsmen.

A Home Office consultation paper concedes that there are possible alternatives to the outright abolition of the jury trial option. One is that jury trial should be denied to defendants who have been convicted of similar charges in the past and therefore have no unblemished record to defend.

ENVIRONMENTALISTS were moderately pleased, and motoring organisations infuriated, by cuts of more than two-thirds in the roads programme.

There was widespread approval for a £125 million tunnel to bury the A303 near Britain's most important archaeological monument, Stonehenge, but environmentalists condemned the decision to widen the M25 motorway near London's Heathrow airport to create the country's first 12-lane motorway. They complained this would strengthen the case for building a fifth terminal at Heathrow airport.

Other parts of the country were dismayed by what they saw as the indiscriminate slashing of 36 projects, 15 of them deemed "essential" by the British Road Federation, and the postponement for review of another 44 schemes.

THE concept of "Care in the Community" for the mentally ill is to receive a radical shake-up only eight years after it was brought in by the Thatcher government. The intended changes are partly in response to killings and suicides by former in-patients whose medication is no longer supervised.

Paul Boateng, the minister responsible for mental health policy, said doctors would be given powers to force mental patients who were not in hospital to take their medication. This, he assured civil liberties groups, would not mean patients being "held down and forcibly injected over their kitchen tables". What it did mean was that health workers would be empowered to enter patients' homes and take them to an "appropriate clinical setting" where they could, lawfully, be forcibly medicated.

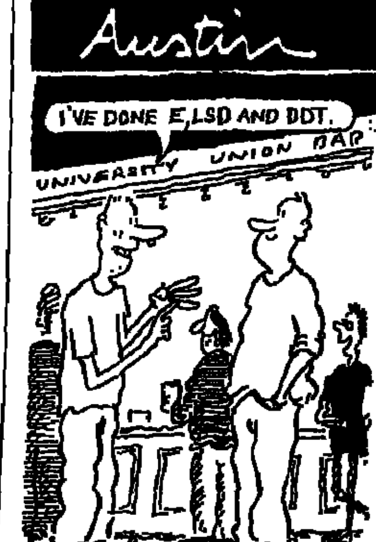
In what promises to be an expensive package to rehabilitate the community care programme, there will be round-the-clock services for patients, including "outreach" teams to work with those in danger of relapse; more acute care beds; a network of community units staffed by nurses day and night; a 24-hour crisis helpline for patients and carers; and improved training for mental-health workers.

A VET, jailed for life in 1995 for killing his wife, was freed after fresh evidence suggested she had committed suicide in such a way as to implicate him in her murder.

David Ryan James was alleged to have poisoned his wife Sandra with a powerful horse anaesthetic. But his second wife, whom he married while in prison, discovered a note while clearing out his office. Written by his first wife, it said: "Ryan, I leave you absolutely nothing but this note — if you find it in time." This echoed her will, written earlier, in which she said: "To my husband, Ryan, I leave absolutely nothing."

STUDENTS and young people in Britain were reported by the US Environmental Protection Agency to have been paid £600 to take highly toxic pesticides normally tested on rats. They included the organophosphate poison, dichlorvos, used in fly strips and dog collars.

The experiments, conducted at laboratories in Manchester and Scotland, are not illegal under British or US law — a government spokesman said they "seemed to be along the right lines, ethically" — but environment groups on both sides of the Atlantic were quick to condemn them. The Washington-based Environmental Working Group, which uncovered evidence of the experiments under the US Freedom of Information Act, claimed that tests were being carried out on humans "to see how high exposure levels can be without causing licensing problems".





Summer breeze . . . A woman wrapped up against the wind, rain and cold of one of the coolest summers in memory, contemplates a sea of empty deckchairs at Southend, in Essex. Temperatures are set to rise after weeks of dull, damp weather and localised flooding — but only for England and Wales PHOTO: RUSSELL BOYCE

MPs attack forced child migration

Lucy Ward

MPs last week called on the Government to apologise to former child migrants shipped to far-flung parts of empire in a long-suppressed experiment in social engineering.

In a report on the scandal, which saw tens of thousands of British children dispatched to former colonies as recently as the late 1960s, the Commons health select committee demanded urgent action to help the migrants trace surviving relatives and visit the UK.

The report also called for the immediate opening of all files detailing the migrants' personal histories, and demanded payment of social security benefits to those visiting the UK to be reunited with their families.

The eight-month inquiry has brought to light the often harrowing history of a policy which took children from British orphanages and children's homes — often without their parents' knowledge or consent — and transplanted them to institutions mainly in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, where many suffered violence and sexual abuse.

Prominent charities, including Dr Barnardo's and the National Children's Home, were among the agencies who sent the children overseas with financial backing from the government.

At the report's launch last week MPs condemned the systematic mistreatment of the children who endured beatings, severe hunger and, in some cases, serial rape.

Evidence from former migrants and sending agencies confirmed that a racist motive underlay the scheme, which was portrayed as offering deprived children a better future in lands of opportunity.

One migrant described how, on arrival in Fremantle, Western Australia, he and other children were greeted by a clergyman who said: "It's nice to see you children here. Australia needs you. We need white stock . . . We are terrified of the Asian hordes."

The aim of the inquiry was not merely to expose the policy, but to examine how former migrants could best be helped. The report does not recommend compensation, following fears from migrants that the legal efforts to apportion blame would cause significant delays, jeopardising their efforts to contact often ageing relatives.

Meanwhile a request that Australia order an inquiry into the sexual and physical abuse was branded hypocritical by an Australian minister.

The family services minister, Warwick Smith said: "The issue is a little rich for some of the British people to now be calling on the Australian government to inquire into a decision they made which defies all logic."

But he said he would ask the Roman Catholic Church to explain its part in the forced migration. The committee's report named orphanages run by the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of Mercy as worthy of criminal investigation.

A delegation of 10 MPs visited Australia and New Zealand and heard damning testimony about the violation of young migrants.

One former migrant said the Christian Brothers had competed to be the first to rape him 100 times.

Five years ago, the order apologised for the abuse and offered compensation and counselling to its victims.

Police think again on racial issues

Duncan Campbell

THE police service is to rethink the way it handles racial issues in light of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. Senior officers say a "major cultural change" is to take place to win the confidence of the black community.

It also emerged last week that for the first time two black officers will be in command of key London areas. Superintendent Ron Hope and Supt Mike Fuller will run divisions in Hornsey and Battersea, giving black officers their highest profile yet in the capital.

Announcing the formation of an Association of Chief Police Officers task force to look into issues surrounding police/race relations, John Newing, Chief Constable of Derbyshire, said: "We feel that the police service has made significant progress in this complex area over the last 20 years, but we recognise that more can and must be done."

One of the priorities of the police will be recruiting greater numbers of officers from ethnic minorities. Two per cent of the service in England and Wales comes from ethnic groups that make up 5.6 per cent of the population as a whole.

In London a special unit now works exclusively on recruiting ethnic minority officers. The total of minority officers in the Metropolitan Police is about 900 — 4 per cent of the Met's total strength. Eight per cent of new recruits are from ethnic minorities. It is estimated that by 2006 about 30 per cent of the population of London will be from ethnic minorities, and the Met is anxious to try to reflect that mix.

Meanwhile it emerged that at least 380 people have died in police custody in the 1990s — mostly as a result of suicide and drink or drug abuse, according to Home Office research published last week. The study covering the period between 1990 and 1996 reveals that 32 deaths were linked to police or other official action.

It also confirms fears that deaths of black detainees are more likely to be linked to police action than those involving white suspects. In London the rate of black deaths in custody is three times higher than the national average.

● The family of Wayne Douglas, whose death in police custody in 1995 led to a riot in Brixton, south London, said they had been denied justice by a Court of Appeal ruling last week which dismissed a demand for a new inquest. The family's solicitor said they would take the case to the House of Lords.

Row erupts over Labour 'cronyism'

Gerard Seenan and Ewen MacAskill

TONY BLAIR faced renewed accusations of cronyism this week after taking the extremely rare step of appointing a businessman to the Government even though he was not an MP, or a peer — or even a member of the Labour party.

The appointment of Gus Macdonald, who built up the Scottish Media Group that runs a television station and two newspapers, as Industry Minister for Scotland provoked outrage from Labour backbenchers as well as the Scottish National Party and the Liberal Democrats.

But the Government cited the precedent set by Margaret Thatcher's appointment of David Young to her government in 1984. Mr Young, now Lord Young, moved from business to the Cabinet.

Mr Macdonald is a long-time friend of the Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar. Only hours after Mr Macdonald was presented as a new member of Mr Dewar's Scottish team, Downing Street rushed out a statement announcing his elevation to the Lords.

Scottish Labour MPs, passed over for promotion, gave voice to their resentment at seeing someone parachuted in from outside.

Tam Dalyell, MP for Linlithgow, said: "It's hardly surprising that more and more people are accusing the Labour party of cronyism." He said he was "saddened" at the appointment's implication that none of Labour's younger MPs in Scotland was considered up to the job.

There are now seven ministers in the Scottish Office, more than many Whitehall departments, against five under the Tories.

Mr Macdonald, who built up the Scottish Media Group from a £50 million business to one worth £500 million, denied the cronyism charge: "I think cronyism is the buzz word of the last month or two, but I think it starts to lose all meaning if you attach it to this."

His appointment was welcomed by the Scottish business community, the Scottish Trades Union Congress and the Confederation of British Industry.

Scottish Nationalist Party leader Alex Salmond said: "This extraordinary development of appointing Gus Macdonald in the morning and then ennobling him in the afternoon unquestionably shows why we need a Scottish Parliament: to give democracy back to the people of Scotland."

A spokesman for Mr Dewar said his peerage was not announced with the other new peers on June 20 because Mr Macdonald could not dispose of shares in companies that were announcing results at that time.



Gus Macdonald: his new post has infuriated Labour MPs

Derry march to go ahead

Rory Carroll

NORTHERN Ireland's Parades Commission salvaged a spirit of generosity from the marching season on Monday when nationalist residents in Londonderry reached agreement with loyalist Apprentice Boys about Saturday's flashpoint parade.

Fears of violence receded when mediators announced that last weekend's proximity talks had produced a breakthrough. It is the first major success for the commission, which has been criticised since its inception last year as ineffectual and clumsy. It appointed a key mediator to shuttle between negotiations because marchers refused to meet residents.

The deal allows the main parade of 15,000 Apprentice Boys, commemorating the lifting of the siege of Derry in 1689, to march on the city walls. The accompanying band will stop playing as it passes the section overlooking the Catholic Bogside. A token 13 marchers will lay a wreath at the city's cenotaph.

The Bogside Residents' Group will not stage a planned demonstration at the memorial. Nor will loyalist "feeder parades" en route to Derry travel through Catholic areas. Parades through Dunloy and the Lower Ormeau Road in Belfast have been banned, and the one in Bellaghy rerouted.

Hardline Orangemen hopeful of forcing a resolution over the impasse at Drumcree admitted they had lost an opportunity to regain momentum. Portadown Orangemen are maintaining a token presence at the barrier blocking the path to the nationalist Garvaghy Road.

Seeds of goodwill were sown last year when the Apprentice Boys dismissed a band that had broken ranks to attack nationalists. They also tried to make the annual celebration more acceptable to Catholics by introducing a week-long festival and forbidding marchers from drinking. Even so, prospects of a deal had looked bleak.

In a separate development the breakaway Real IRA claimed responsibility for a car bomb that injured 35 people in Banbridge, Co Down last weekend. The group said it had also firebombed two Belfast shops and a pub.

Jobs blow for Northeast

Mark Milner and Peter Hetherington

THE German industrial giant, Siemens, is to close its £1 billion semi-conductor plant in the Northeast, with the loss of up to 1,100 jobs, little more than a year after it was officially opened by the Queen.

The North Tyneside factory, built with about £50 million of government grant aid, will be run down from the end of this month unless Siemens can find a buyer or a partner to share the losses.

The announcement was a stunning blow for the area. The plant was a key part of local plans to try to build up a high technology base and contributed an estimated £70 million a year to the local economy.

With Britain's manufacturing sector already in recession, the announcement is bound to raise fears that more job losses and factory closures are on the way. Last month, BMW warned that 1,500 jobs would have to go at its Rover subsidiary.

Siemens's explanation that the closure was forced by cut-throat competition from Korean semi-conductor manufacturers will add to concerns that Asian companies, desperate to export their way out of the region's economic crisis, will undercut manufacturers in Europe and the United States.

The Government and the company have set up a task force to save the facility, but Siemens admitted the chances of doing so were low.

● BMW last week pulled off a stunning coup over Volkswagen, by snapping up the exclusive rights to produce the world's most prestigious motoring brand — the Rolls-Royce — for a mere £40 million.

In an extraordinary twist to a long battle between the two German groups, VW conceded that it had ended up paying £479 million for the less-renowned Bentley marque.

The deal came three weeks after VW completed its purchase of Rolls-Royce Motors, makers of both brands, from Vickers. However, the new deal splits the Rolls-Royce car producer in two. Until 2003 VW will build Bentleys and Rolls-Royces, with engines supplied by BMW. Then VW will build just Bentleys.

Chaos strikes A level board

Vivek Chaudhary

TEACHING unions and the Government this week demanded a review from one of the country's largest examination boards after fears that thousands of pupils could receive wrong A level results.

The prospect of a calamity over this year's results, due on August 20, has emerged after problems with a new computer system at the Oxford and Cambridge Examinations and Assessment Council.

According to reports, some students have been entered, via the computer, for subjects they have not studied. In some cases the computer did not enter names at all, meaning students' chances of going to university could be jeopardised.

A spokesman for the Department of Education said: "We will be seeking reassurance from Oxford and Cambridge officials that they will meet the August 20 deadline for accurate results."

Concerns over the new computer system first arose in May when schools had still not received confirmation about candidates they had entered. The examination board agreed that there had been problems, but said all pupils would receive the correct results by August 20.

The National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers said that to avoid future confusion, a national, centralised exam board to improve communication with schools, might be more effective.

Blair's rosy round-up omits blunders

Ewen MacAskill

TONY Blair met with derision from Tory and Labour MPs last week when he published a 115-page annual report on the achievements of what he described as a "radical, reforming" government.

He launched the report with a speech to ministers and civil servants in Downing Street's Rose Garden, in scenes reminiscent of the US president's State of the Union address. He said he was embarked on a "quiet revolution".

The glossy report was a government, rather than a party, publication and was billed as measuring Labour's manifesto promises against achievement.

But the Conservative leader, William Hague, dismissed it as "fiction", and the Liberal Democrats called for a properly audited report.

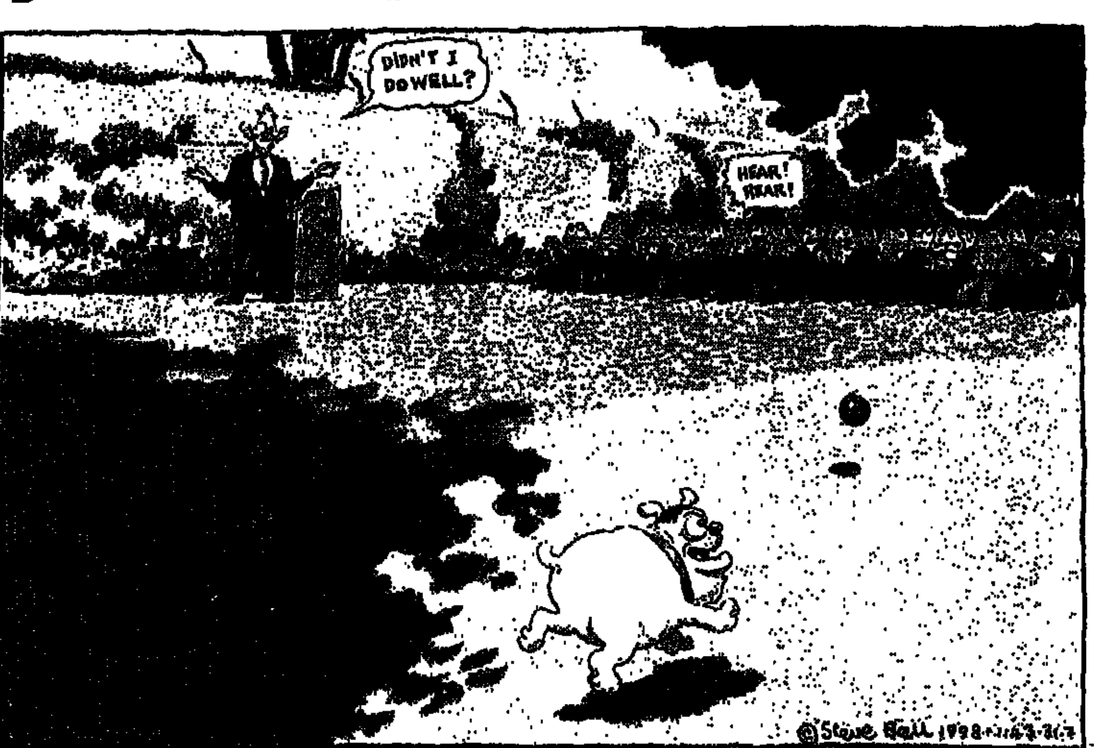
Mr Blair told those assembled in the Rose Garden that the report set out Labour's 177 manifesto commitments: of these 50 had been met, 119 were under way and only eight were yet to be timetabled. He expressed hopes that his administration could "in retrospect and in history . . . be seen as one of the great radical reforming governments of our time".

In an attempt to address accusations that his attempts at welfare reform had so far failed, he set out initiatives already undertaken.

But Mr Blair referred only in passing to the Government's failures. "We haven't done everything we wanted to do," he said. "Some things have gone better than others. And there are always 'events' to deal with.

"But we have a clear sense of purpose and direction, a clear strategy for the future, principles and policies that will see us through."

For the Liberal Democrats, the campaigns chairman, Nick Harvey, said: "Instead of producing a self-congratulatory glossy report at the taxpayers' expense, the Government should allow the National Audit Office to independently audit their manifesto pledges and their delivery of public services."



The report is easy to mock as a throwback to the kind of glossy, vacuous documents that Labour produced in the late 1980s. It is effectively a Labour party manifesto put out at taxpayers' expense, costing £95,000 so far.

But if this is the Government's annual report, where is the row over Formula One and the tobacco industry? Where is the row over the lobbyists? And if welfare is such a success, why has Mr Blair sacked almost the entire ministerial team?

On the economy, many people do not regard the high pound and high interest rates as a success, and believe the country is on the verge of a recession.

By almost any measure, the Government has had a good first year in office. Even if they had done nothing else, Mr Blair and his team have pushed forward the peace process in Northern Ireland, creating the best opportunity for a lasting settlement since the conflict began. There are few people unaware of its record. It did not require this kind of crude propaganda to reinforce it.

In Brief

TWO transsexuals — Kristina Sheffield and Rachel Horsham — who fought to be legally recognised as female, lost their cases at the European Court of Human Rights.

MI5 holds nearly half a million files on individuals it has targeted since it was set up in 1909, it was disclosed as the secret service published a glossy brochure to dispel "myths and misunderstandings about its activities".

THE FIRST transplant of an animal organ into a human being is within sight after the Government gave a green light to pioneering xenotransplantation research companies.

CHILD protection agencies appealed for a new body to be set up to investigate organised child abuse after nine adults in one family were jailed for a total of 100 years, for a series of horrific sex offences against children as young as three going back over 35 years.

THE Agriculture Minister, Nick Brown, performed the first U-turn in his new job by dropping plans to restrict sales of vitamin B6.

THERE is no medical evidence that "repetitive strain injury" exists, a judge ruled in a decision against three Financial Times journalists that could affect thousands of computer and keyboard operators suffering chronic pain and stiffness in their arms, back and neck.

AN ELITE network of "beacon" councils, setting an example for other authorities, will be created over the next few years in an attempt to breathe new life into local government, the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, announced.

MOHAMED AL Fayed failed in the High Court to block a libel action against him taken by Neil Hamilton, the disgraced former Tory minister in the cash-for-questions affair.

ROGER ALTON, features editor of the Guardian, has been appointed editor of the Observer newspaper.

POLICE in Hull have dismissed talk of a serial killer on the loose as "pure speculation" after the murder of a third prostitute in recent weeks. All three victims had been heroin addicts.

A NEW YORK federal court dismissed a sexual and racial discrimination case against Virgin Atlantic on the first day of its hearing, handing a dramatic victory to Richard Branson in what he called a three-year legal blackmail attempt against his airline.

Land-mine ban announced with 'significant loophole'

Richard Norton-Taylor

GEORGE Robertson, the Defence Secretary, last week announced an immediate and total ban on the use of anti-personnel land-mines by British forces as the Government ratified an international convention outlawing the indiscriminate weapon estimated to kill or maim 2,000 people a month.

The Government decided last month to bow to intense public pressure and rush through a Landmines Act in time for the first anniversary of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, who championed the campaign against the weapon.

Until last week, ministers would have been allowed to deploy mines in "exceptional circumstances".

"The most professional army in the world now has said that this is not a system that is morally correct or militarily useful," Mr Robertson said.

The largely symbolic decision — a British moratorium on the use of mines has been in place for a year — was welcomed by the British Red Cross and the Mines Advisory Group, the mine clearance organisation. Lou McGrath, director of MAG, said Britain had taken a moral stand of which it should be proud.

However, Mr McGrath said a significant loophole remained. British troops working with Nato would still be able to help others lay mines. The United States has said it will not sign the Ottawa Convention, which prohibits use of land-mines, until 2006 and then not without conditions. The US and Turkey are the only Nato countries which have not signed the convention.

Responding to opposition criticism that the loophole was in breach of the Ottawa Convention, or at least its intention, the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, told the Commons on July 10 that it would "protect British troops from being criminalised by the action of American troops who may be taking part in the same operation".

The junior foreign minister, Baroness Symons, told peers that, in the Government's view, the Ottawa Convention did not prevent British troops working with other countries' forces that were using land-mines.

"The mere participation in the planning or execution of operations, exercises or other military activity by the UK's armed forces . . . in combination with the armed forces of states not party to the Ottawa Convention, which engage in activity that is prohibited under the convention, is not, by itself, assistance, encouragement or inducement," she said.

The Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesman, Menzies Campbell, described Mr Robertson's announcement as "yet another case of news management for political advantage".

Pro-Europeans move up in PM's reshuffled team

Michael White

TONY Blair last week wrapped up his first government reshuffle with a series of junior appointments which saw pro-European politicians placed in posts at which crucial decisions on the single currency will be made in the years ahead.

As a further gesture to modernity, three of the Class of '97 newcomers got ministerial posts, including two of Neil Kinnock's most trusted aides, the cerebral rivals Charles Clarke and Patricia Hewitt, the latter one of a clutch of new women ministers.

The promotion of Peter Mandelson, instead of the more sceptical Margaret Beckett, to head the Department of Trade and Industry was reinforced by the transfer of the equally enthusiastic former MEP Joyce Quin from the Home Office to be Minister for Europe in Robin Cook's Foreign Office team.

In a pattern which marked the Prime Minister's reshuffle, Ms Quin's predecessor, Doug Henderson, a lieutenant of the Chancellor Gordon Brown, was not dropped. Instead he was moved sideways to the Ministry of Defence in the way that Nick Brown, the Brownite chief whip, was moved from the nerve centre of government operations to the relatively tranquil pastures of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Such moves reflect Mr Blair's growing confidence in the exercise of power in office. The retention of Geoffrey Robinson as Paymaster General, despite the sustained Tory-led campaign against his business dealings, also showed a determination not to be bullied by the media, as John Major was.

There were rumours of a row over that decision. But the wealthy Mr Robinson is regarded as a vital problem-solving asset by Mr Brown and is also close to Mr Blair. In this instance their wishes coincide. Tony Lloyd, the Foreign Office minister caught up in the Sandline affair and acquitted by a subsequent inquiry, was also spared.

The fears of Eurosceptic Tory MPs were realised with the announcement that Lord Sainsbury, the philanthropist and grocer, will join the DTI team in an unpaid capacity. That amounts to an extra pair of hands which might be used to drive the single currency campaign among businessmen.

As well as establishing the supremacy of the Blairites, the reshuffle gives a more pro-European tint to the Government. Indeed Joyce Quin is so pro-European that she speaks foreign languages well enough to be allowed on European TV.

● European Union officials last week celebrated the results of a poll showing British opinion almost evenly balanced for and against the EU's planned single currency.

The latest in the EU's own series of monthly tracking polls of British opinion gives the most pro-euro result yet recorded, with 49 per against submerging the pound into the single currency, and 46 per cent in favour.

Bentley conviction quashed after 45 years

Duncan Campbell

THE bottle of Moët & Chandon champagne that had been sitting in a south London cupboard for 40 years was finally opened last week to celebrate the quashing of Derek Bentley's conviction for the murder of PC Sidney Miles.

Since William Bentley bought the bottle in 1958 in anticipation of toasting his son's pardon, the family has had their hopes raised and clashed many times. In the Court of Appeal last week the long crusade reached its conclusion.

The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham, sitting with Lord Justice Kennedy and Mr Justice Collins, quashed the conviction in a 52-page judgment which severely criticised his predecessor Lord Goddard. He ruled that the conviction had been unsafe because of the judge's intemperate summing-up and expressed regret that the mistrial had not been spotted soon enough to save Bentley.

Maria Dingwall-Bentley, who has led the campaign to clear her uncle's name since her mother, Iris Bentley, died last year, said she was elated by the result but said that her mother had not lived to see it.

"I'm absolutely thrilled," she said. "The British justice system has had a death on its hands for all those years."

She said she held the former Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke in "absolute contempt". He had had the opportunity to pardon her brother on fresh evidence presented to him by a police reinvestigation but declined to do so.

Benedict Birnberg, the family solicitor, who has worked on the case for many years, said: "We are elated at this historic judgment which is 46 years too late."

Tamsin Allen, another member of the legal team which unearthed fresh evidence for the appeal, said that it would seek compensation for the family. She accused the Home Office of lack of will in reopening the case.

Christopher Craig, who fired the shot that killed PC Miles during a warehouse robbery and who served 10 years for the crime because at 16 he had been too young to hang, said he was saddened that it had taken so long to clear Bentley's name. He offered to give evidence in the appeal but was not called.

"I am truly sorry that my actions on November 2, 1952 caused so much pain and misery for the family of PC Miles, who died that night doing his duty, also for the Bentley family," said Mr Craig, who has worked as a plumber and farmer since his release and who lives in Bedfordshire. "A day does not go by when I do not think about Derek and now his innocence has been proved by this judgment." He said he would never make another public statement on the subject.

Fred Broughton, chairman of the Police Federation, said: "Our thoughts are with the family of PC Sidney Miles, who gave his life in the line of duty and whose death is often forgotten."

It has been one of the longest-running campaigns to clear a convicted prisoner's name and has led to books, plays, a film and songs commemorating Bentley's short life.

He was born in 1933 and, with his family, was bombed out three times in south London during the second world war. He had fallen foul of the authorities by the time he was 14 and in 1948, his headmaster at Norbury Manor school in south London called him "the most irregular boy I have had in my career", describing him as "meek, indifferent, sheep-like".

His school report noted that "his parents have on several occasions confessed that the boy is out of hand and out of their control". He was sent to Kingswood approved school near Bristol for breaking into a store. There he was described in reports as "lazy, indifferent, voluble and a 'wise guy' type".

Last week Hugh Maw, the educational psychologist at that school, recalled the young Bentley. "He was never violent, he was bullied and easily led," said Mr Maw.

When there was trouble at the school, added Mr Maw, Bentley would be the one left behind as the brighter boys fled. This led to frequent beatings from the authorities, and Mr Maw and his wife recalled seeing Bentley's back covered with stripes.

It was already apparent that he was educationally sub-normal, as it was then classified. He was unable even to write his name. When he left the school, he fell under the influence of Craig, whose older brother was a well-known criminal. The Bentleys disapproved of the friendship, knowing of Craig's habits, but their son ignored their entreaties, meeting up with Craig on what was to be his last night of freedom.

Craig was armed with a Colt .45 and had given Bentley a knuckle-duster and a knife. Bentley said that he was unaware that they were going to carry out the robbery on the confectionery warehouse until Craig started climbing gates leading into an alleyway. A neighbour spotted the break-in and called the police.

Craig resisted arrest and it was what happened over the next 15 minutes that was to form the basis of the prosecution of both men. Three police officers said that Bentley had shouted out "Let him have it", and one alleged that after those words were uttered a shot was fired and one officer received a glancing blow, probably a ricochet, on the shoulder.

Bentley was overpowered and according to police evidence warned them: "He'll shoot you." It was 15 minutes later that PC Miles received the fatal shot.

Even after his conviction, Bentley hoped for the reprieve that did not come. He was convicted on December 11, 1952; his appeal was turned down on January 13, 1953; and he was hanged two weeks later on January 28.

It's Clinton's own affair

A MARRIED man has a sexual encounter with a woman: later they discuss ways of covering it up. It is a familiar tale to many people. Should it be of compelling interest because the man in question is the president of the United States? And is the attempt to conceal the relationship an impeachable offence? The immunity deal reached between Monica Lewinsky and the so-called independent counsel Kenneth Starr ensures that the story will fill summer pages whichever way these questions are answered, but it does not make them any less valid.

The deal struck by Mr Starr will not affect judgment on these basic issues, but it does shift the tactical balance of advantage against Bill Clinton. At the beginning of the year he said he was keen to tell the American people the full story, but was hampered by the legal process. As long as Ms Lewinsky and Mr Starr were at odds, the White House could present the inquiry as a judicial witch-hunt. Now Ms Lewinsky is about to tell the facts as she purports to remember them, Mr Clinton faces a new challenge. Legal prudence would suggest that he should continue to procrastinate — at least till he has heard her version — but this could shift public opinion against him. By deciding instead to testify soon he has created a new dilemma: should he stick to his story and invite the entire world to measure his credibility against that of his former intern? Or should he admit that he was telling less than the full truth (as most people now believe)? So far public opinion has generally been more impatient with Mr Clinton's pursuers than with him. But when the time comes for more definite judgment, it could be less sympathetic.

This is where those fundamental questions will become critical. Opinion polls suggest that on the issue of consensual sex (or something approaching it) most Americans feel that this is not a matter for censure. There is one area of doubt: can any such relationship be truly consensual when it involves such a mismatch of personal power? Yet Ms Lewinsky appears to have enjoyed the excitement of a liaison — innocent or otherwise — and why not? So far Mr Clinton deserves a generally positive verdict: his behaviour may be distasteful to some, but it is essentially a private matter.

The issue of perjury will cause more trouble to many Americans — and abroad too. Ms Lewinsky's role was first raised in a private lawsuit brought by Paula Jones against Mr Clinton in which both denied a sexual relationship. Mr Starr then extended his Whitewater fishing expedition to investigate allegations of a cover-up involving Ms Lewinsky. Mr Clinton would not be the first person in a witness-box to have sought to evade the truth — perhaps convincing himself that what did occur did not amount to fully-fledged "sexual relations", or that a few ambiguous episodes did not amount to the "affair" that he later denied on television.

Such behaviour is wrong, but not perhaps so shockingly wrong. There is also a degree of irony in expecting a president to be absolutely truthful on personal matters when he heads a government that often varnishes the truth — or worse — on matters of much graver importance. This summer now seems likely to be remembered for the climax of the Lewinsky saga, but it is not so earth-shaking that it should bring the president down.

A flawed commission

THE WRIT held by South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission to hold hearings on human rights violations has now run out. It still faces a mountain of work, with a five-volume report to President Mandela by the end of October and some 2,000 amnesty applications still to decide, a task that will take it well into the New Year. Yet it's a time to congratulate Archbishop Tutu and his team, having discharged a near-impossible task with integrity and courage.

Admiration, however, should not be allowed to obscure the limitations of the commission and less positive aspects of its work. Its main achievement is the impact it has had on Afrikanerdom. It brought home to that community the true nature of what many had believed to be a struggle for Christian values and Western standards against the evils of terrorism and atheistic communism. This humiliating realisation, that theirs was the true terrorism, seems to have defused rightwing militancy even if the scale of the effect cannot be directly measured.

In other respects the educative value of the commission is debatable. There are some big holes in its work. The armed forces have called the commission's bluff by their non-co-operation. Problems of jurisdiction prevented the full story of atrocities committed by the South African state abroad from emerging — such as political assassinations in Europe and experiments in the use of poison during the Rhodesian war. P W Botha has been obdurate. The National party government destroyed secret files. Thus attempts to pin down the culpability of senior politicians have been frustrated. Limits imposed on the commission's jurisdiction prevented the ANC camps scandal — the reverse side of the racial coin where apartheid-era atrocity was concerned — from being ventilated.

The quality of the "truth" the commission has uncovered must anyway be questionable. Its final report will, in general terms, be a reasonably fair representation of the crimes committed in the name of apartheid and of the liberation struggle. But findings will inevitably be heavily dependent on confession, and there remain good reasons why the courts and the common law are prejudiced against evidence of that kind. The commission's contribution to reconciliation must also be questioned. Recent polls suggest that racial polarisation has never been as deeply felt as now in post-apartheid South Africa: the commission may well have contributed to that mood. Most seriously, the process by which amnesty has been granted has required applicants to show that their bombings and killings had a political dimension; this has undermined the principle of personal responsibility so central to the lessons of Nuremberg.

It is argued that amnesty was necessary to unlock the "secrets" of apartheid. But it could be argued that if the millions spent on the commission had instead been allocated to the admirable work of the Transvaal attorney-general, Jan d'Oliveira, and his investigators, as much could have been achieved without compromising the rule of law.

South Africa's comparatively peaceful transition to majority rule has been held out as a model for conflict resolution in Northern Ireland. The truth commission is a central part of that model. But while the value of a formal inquiry into civil conflict is beyond question, experience does not demand a repetition of Archbishop Tutu's adventures in pursuit of the truth.

Self-rule must be credible

IT IS A familiar tale. European envoys report finding a "wasteland" in central Kosovo. Foreign monitors say they have "lost track" of more than 20,000 refugees who fled the town of Malisevo. Serbian officers deny ethnic cleansing, but the burning houses and the bewildered peasants on dusty roads evoke memories of Bosnia not long ago. The impression of hopeless drift is echoed at the diplomatic level. Last week the European Union troika team met President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade to be told, with equal implausibility, that the offensive in Kosovo was over and that he might be more "flexible" on the terms of autonomy.

For Serbia to show flexibility three things must happen, none of them very likely. First, Serbia has to be weakened — which means that international pressure must be sustained over months rather than surge up and then subside as has happened in Kosovo. Second, Kosovan resistance has to be knitted together to form something like a common front — a more than usually difficult task.

The separatist Kosovo Liberation Army, brought to life by years of Serbian repression, is a complicating factor. Suggestions that the West has tacitly condoned the new Serbian offensive, in order to clip the KLA's wings, are hotly denied. Indeed, a weak KLA could be a greater obstacle to negotiations, playing a Hamas-like role. A smarter strategy might be to back the KLA and in doing so push for unity among the factions.

The third requirement is for a coherent road map ahead. If self-rule is a more prudent goal than independence, it has to be so comprehensive as to make little difference. Any peaceful solution, as Germany's foreign minister Klaus Kinkel said last week, has to be underwritten by an international military presence. Kosovo has already become another Bosnia, although we are still a long way off another Dayton agreement.

Conspiracy thrives on a diet of complacency

Peter Preston

DAVID SHAYLER is not a hero to seize the imagination. And his message is predictably unheroic, too. It tells us that the secret world of MI5 is full of stumblebums and paper shufflers compiling vast files on threats to the nation who wind up as Home Secretary or Industry Secretary a few years on. It is the cock-up theory of intelligence history yet again.

We are gorged on such cock-ups. We have banqueted on Burgess and Maclean, feasted on Philby, sipped too much cognac late at night over the imbecilities of Peter Wright. We know that closed, bureaucratic organisations run to rampant inefficiency. That was why Mrs Thatcher began her privatisations. That is why Jack Straw is suddenly raging against the cosy club of sick days and early retirements for the police.

So what's new? What does Shayler bring to the party except more farcical fumblings? The great and the good cluster defensively and the wheels of justice grind on. All may, or may not, be revealed in court much later. Our August antennae remain at neutral. We have ceased to worry about conspiracies. But wait just a moment and roll the clock back a decade or two, when MI5 was busy filling its files with Straw and Patricia Hewitt, the very stuff of New Labour. What was happening in a couple of sunny spots well within our ken?

In Spain — democratic Spain, governed by charming New Socialists — the interior minister, the Señor Straw of his day, and his deputy, were fiddling public funds to finance the kidnapping of an innocent Basque businessman. On their orders Segundo Marey was held incommunicado for 10 days while those who loved him despaired. Their officials and tame police staged the snatch. They were, quite literally, out of control.

Last week the Madrid Supreme Court sentenced those ex-ministers, José Barrionuevo and Rafael Vera, to 10 years in prison. And they sentenced their sidekicks, too. Other trials with other defendants will have to take place before we know for sure who masterminded GAL, the Anti-terror Liberation Groups, which, over the precise span of the second Thatcher government, murdered 28 suspected Basque terrorists — many of whom, it transpired, were not terrorists at all.

The beleaguered Spanish state, beset by the wild men of ETA, fractured under pressure. It took, by fair means and foul, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. It kidnapped, authorised at the top. It killed, authorised somewhere along a mystic chain. And that period of shame is known because whistles were eventually blown and newspaper reporters turned over stones.

Meanwhile in South Africa Eugene De Kock, a police commander at the Vlakplaas base, was obeying orders as usual, killing black activists. He beat one to death with a snooker cue. He cut one in half with a spade. He bombed churches and trade union offices. We know because he has been convicted in formal court proceedings. And we know, from his lips, the men who gave the orders. Not pen-pushers, but the government ministers of the day, the reasonable fellows who wooed Mrs T against sanctions.

Vlakplaas moreover was no maverick institution. It had the Roodeplat laboratory to share its load. There Dr Wouter Basson — as authorised by Pretoria — developed the compounds of seemingly "natural" death: millions of cholera organisms, anthrax in the gum of envelopes, ways to lace drinks with the thallium that could rot the brain. Dr Basson had his orders, and those who gave them had lists of their intended murder victims — in Britain and South Africa.

This was Project Coast, the state plan for chemical and biological murder. It is documented, and those documents exist. The evidence beyond them, from those who worked on this barbarous Coast, is commodious and impeccably marshalled, according to what we may call the Lewinsky Assumption: the assumption that those who testify without fear of retribution before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are telling the truth.

These were conspiracies — Spanish conspiracies, South African conspiracies — that reached to the heart of government. Why do we assume that such conspiracies are dead, or confined to a few ramshackle "palaces" on the outskirts of Baghdad? Barrionuevo was sentenced to prison last week. Dr Basson is now impaled on the hook of his past. They were both servants of elected administrations which found, in desperation, other means to fight their battles and confront their enemies.

OF COURSE it's impossible to take such examples from the eighties and apply them to the world today. A conspiracy to get Bill Clinton? Peels of merry laughter and jokes about paranoia. A conspiracy to bump off Colonel Muammar Gadafy? Such tales come from disaffected ex-intelligence officers who've broken "their vow of silence" to turn up the heat. What real chap gives credence to the unsubstantiated word of non-chaps?

I wish I could be so blithe. But when the first rumours of the GAL hit squads began to circulate, there was only incredulity. When the Botha government was in the dock of public opinion, the depths of its secret depravity went unplumbed. We have barely — through all the long, bitter years of Northern Ireland — stopped to inquire how the fight against terrorism was waged in detail, according to which edition of the Queensberry Rules.

The triumph of Spain last week is that it did stop to ask and explore its murky past. The triumph of South Africa is that it has found a way of confronting the evil that flowed within it. But we in Britain ask no such questions and seek no such triumphs. We pursue those who rock, even gently, our boat piled high with complacency. Just another stinking cock-up, old boy. Just another bunch of flakes hunting a little cheap publicity. Let us hope so.

But, in an era where everything from Bloody Sunday to the ghost of Derek Bentley may be disinterred for apologies when it is all too late; when every certainty of today is tomorrow's shame: don't hold your breath.


Men in traditional dress perform a church service for the victims of the disaster PHOTO: RICK RYCROFT

Papuans seek reasons for tidal wave tragedy

Florence de Changy in Vanimo

TEN days after a tidal wave devastated the Sissano lagoon on the northern coast of Papua New Guinea, killing about 1,600 people and leaving several thousand others unaccounted for, its waters are still cluttered with rotting human corpses and animal carcasses. The area has been cordoned off for health reasons and the threat of an epidemic seems to have been averted for the time being.

For the past week, a fleet of civil and military planes and helicopters has been ferrying the wounded out, and medicines, food supplies and water into Wewak, a town about 150km east of the lagoon.

Rose Wharehoka, a teacher in Wewak, described the disaster that occurred on July 18 in apocalyptic terms: "The earth shook three times. Then came the first crashing sound. People went out on to the beach to see what was happening. They couldn't understand. After the third quake, the sea turned red. Then they heard a terrible roar, like 10 aircraft taking off.

"Then the sea rolled back, well beyond the lowest tides they had ever seen. In the end it returned like some gigantic waterfall and crashed down on them." The tidal wave was, she said, "an alarm call sounded by God so that we should prepare for the return of the Messiah".

But why should it have happened here, in a land of such faithful churchgoers? "On July 17 a statue of the Virgin Mary was decapitated by young rebels," said one patient at Wewak hospital.

"If you rebel, God has to get angry," another said.

Papuan culture attaches great importance to such notions as revenge and the paying back of a gift with a gift. And even though the region is 90 per cent Catholic and has the highest concentration of missionaries in the world (roughly one for every 2,000 inhabitants), old beliefs are still deep-rooted. Not surprisingly, supernatural reasons for the disaster have been aired.

But people do not talk easily, as the subject is *tapu* (sacred). They make dark allusions to the allegedly depraved behaviour of those living in the devastated villages. One missionary claimed that a fetishistic black-magic ceremony had taken place a few days before the tidal wave, in the course of which *sangumas* (evil witch doctors) allegedly ate nine children.

Meanwhile an unexpectedly high degree of intertribal solidarity has manifested itself. And international aid has poured in on a scale out of all proportion with the disaster — less than a year ago the appalling drought that brought starvation to hundreds of thousands of Papuans elicited no response at all.

The community may recover sooner than Westerners think. "Give the lagoon's eels, crocs and other scavengers six months to clean everything up, and it will once again be possible to fish crayfish and lobsters and hunt duck and wild pig," says a former policeman. "You won't be able to prevent people from going back — it's heaven on earth out there."

(July 30)

Cycling into a storm

EDITORIAL
Jean-Marie Colombani

FROM the moment that Marco Pantani donned the victor's yellow jersey in the Champs-Elysées in Paris on August 2, at the end of the 1998 Tour de France, the cycle race prepared to face up to a different kind of challenge: that of overhauling itself.

Undermined by a doping scandal, destabilised by police investigations and discredited by its management's pigheadedness, the Tour came perilously close to imploding. There is no way it will be able to go ahead in 1999 as though nothing had happened.

For far too long, professional cyclists thought they were above the law. They are now having to grapple with the reality of the penal code. Mollycoddled by team managers who acted as accomplices, and by organisers who turned a blind eye, the riders scooted along the highways of France like a Roman military formation, secure in the belief they had solid shields to protect them.

Their contempt for the rules, their indifference to a string of warnings, and their cynicism have spawned the crisis. Those taking part in the race, which is extremely popular and attracts more media coverage than almost any other sporting event in France, ended up believing that they were invulnerable.

By allowing the Tour to deteriorate as it has, they have shown they believe that any means are justified if it results in success. They have left the sport of cycling and everything that gravitates around it marred by practices that one had assumed to be restricted to the communist countries of eastern Europe, and to have withered since the Berlin Wall came down.

Even if it is true that the pursuit of justice is sometimes served by an injustice — why, for example, was Richard Virenque singled out as an offender rather than some other champion? — it is good news that investigating magistrates, police and customs officers have acted firmly.

The Tour de France has been dealt a body blow. But it will recover, providing it is not content merely to pick on scapegoats — the riders, team managers and doctors are themselves victims — and that it sets out to make improvements to a gruelling tour circuit now beyond the abilities of mere mortals, and breaks up the networks which provide illegal performance-enhancing substances — networks that bear a remarkable resemblance to those peddling hard drugs. Then, and only then, will the Tour be reborn, assuredly to everyone's delight.

(August 2-3)

Ex-minister jailed over 'dirty war' role

Marie-Claude Decamps in Madrid

ON JULY 29 a court in Madrid handed out prison sentences totalling 88 years to 12 people — among them the former Socialist interior minister, José Barrionuevo, and his head of security, Rafael Vera. They were found guilty of involvement in the 1983 kidnapping of a salesman, Segundo Marey, by members of the Anti-terrorist Liberation Groups, known as GAL.

GAL — set up in the early eighties to combat the activities of ETA, the military wing of the Basque separatist movement — later realised it had got the wrong man and released him. Subsequent trials will deal with the murders in southern France of 28 people, thought to be radical Basques, by GAL "death squads" between 1983 to 1987. Nine of those killed had no connection with ETA.

This first trial, paradoxically the one dealing with a case where no murder was committed, has had a symbolic significance. It reflects a desire — variously described as courageous and reckless — on the part of a young democracy to call into question its own past methods and not shrink from delving into a "dirty war".

The war was waged by police and politicians, mostly Basques, who, at a time when the French authorities were not co-operating with their Spanish counterparts, and ETA's victims were running to several hundred a year, took it upon themselves to combat terrorists by using their own methods.

The Madrid court based its ruling on the confessions of several of the accused and on the presumption that the GAL could not have been set up "without the consent of Barrionuevo and Vera".

Barrionuevo and Vera, both given 10-year sentences, will not actually go to jail until September. They will no doubt appeal to the Constitutional Court. But their sentences raise the broader issue of the moral and political responsibility of their former boss, ex-prime minister Felipe González, who was cleared of involvement by the courts in November 1996.

At one point in the trial a prosecution barrister, irritated by Barrionuevo's and Vera's protestations of innocence, asked: "If you're not responsible, who is?" His question prompted an embarrassed silence in court.

It is hardly surprising that one week before the official verdict was due to be delivered a press leak revealed that the two former leading members of the Spanish Workers' Socialist party (PSOE) would be convicted. Commentators naturally focused once again on González's role.

The day after the leak the ruling People's party (PP), the Basque Nationalist party, and the Communists together called on González to "assume his responsibilities" and withdraw from public life altogether. González has often been mentioned as a possible candidate to succeed Jacques Santer as head of the European Commission in two years' time.


Barrionuevo: his conviction has focused minds on González's role

The PSOE had noisily claimed from the very beginning that the trial was a "political war machine" designed to destroy the party and its former leader.

The party's current secretary-general, Joaquin Almunia, referring to the PSOE's 14 years in power, said: "Certain anti-democrats want to reduce to dust the figure of Felipe González and the most brilliant period in the modern history of Spain. We shall not allow that to happen!"

González himself has denounced the "opening of the Socialist-hunting season". He has also said he "will indeed assume his responsibilities", adding that he would do so "in the opposite way to what the crime syndicate expects".

Did "crime syndicate" refer to his conservative enemies? Or to a conglomerate of journalists and businessmen "plotting" his downfall, as he has claimed in recent months? His expression was in any case unfortunate. A PP spokesman urged the former prime minister to adopt a more "serene" attitude, and pointed out that when it came to crime the most important thing was to try those accused of the 28 murders attributed to GAL.

This first GAL trial, which was supposed to ring down the curtain on one of the darkest episodes in the history of Spain's democracy, may result in a serious political crisis that could damage the PSOE. The party is divided over how it should renew itself in the wake of the bad publicity that has accompanied the GAL verdict. As one commentator put it, the Socialists must "at last cut the umbilical cord that drags them back towards the past and prevents them from facing the future".

So is the political stage set for a period of increased tension? The conservatives would not welcome that. They are currently engaged in a campaign to win over centrist voters and they cannot afford to blatantly exploit the GAL verdict if they are to honour their pledge to introduce "trust and political stability".

On top of that, the conservatives badly need to maintain a consensus with the Socialists if they are to succeed in their campaign to combat terrorism.

(July 31)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Bonn and Warsaw bicker over the past

Jan Krauze in Warsaw

WITH their prospects of victory at Germany's general election next month looking bleak, the ruling Christian Democrats appear to have cast their net wide in an attempt to win over as many voters as possible — and in particular members of associations of Germans expelled from Poland after the war.

As a result German-Polish relations have run into choppy waters over the past two months, for the first time since Bonn recognised the Oder-Neisse line after re-unification in 1991.

Things began to turn sour last spring when a German deportee demanded that a municipality in western Poland pay him rent or compensation for land that had been farmed since 1945.

There followed various statements by leaders of the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU) — which is part of Germany's ruling coalition — demanding that a Prussian library containing thousands of original scores by Mozart and Beethoven be returned to Germany, and hinting that Poland's prospective membership of the European Union might depend on the return of cultural property and the settlement of land ownership rights.

The last broadside came at the end of May when the German federal assembly, the Bundestag, issued a statement stressing that Czech and Polish membership of the EU "would facilitate the settlement of still pending bilateral issues" — that is how Bonn refers to the question of compensation allegedly due to former German landowners. The Poles refuse to discuss the matter on the grounds that it was definitively settled, from a legal point of view, at the 1945 Potsdam conference.

In similar vein the Bundestag claimed that the expulsion of Germans after the war was an injustice and urged the federal government to defend deportees' interests in its "dialogue with Germany's eastern neighbours".

This is not the first time that in the run-up to an election, and under pressure from refugees' organisations, MPs have raised issues regarding Germany's relationship with Poland.

The Bundestag's declaration was more moderately worded than similar statements issued in the past. But from the Polish point of view what matters is not so much what was said as what was implied: that not everything has been settled, and that Poland might have to "pay" to join the EU.

Moreover, the question of the western and northern territories allocated to Poland in 1945 as compensation for the annexation of larger regions by the Soviet Union in 1939 remains highly sensitive in Warsaw. Anything connected, even indirectly, with the issue revives unpleasant memories and provokes strong reactions — as can be seen from the response to the Bundestag's declaration, unanimously condemned by the Polish Diet last month, which solemnly insisted on the "inviolability of borders" in Europe.

In fact the declaration by the Bundestag had subscribed to that view. As a result the Polish response, despite being a watered-down version of a considerably more "energetic" draft, was regarded as having gone too far — both by Germans and by several Polish observers, who spoke of "a dialogue of the deaf".

There is now a clear desire on both sides to put this flurry of minor irritations into perspective. The German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, was quick to disagree with the statements made by the CSU and refugees' organisations, pointing out that under no circumstances could the granting of compensation to former landowners or the "return" of German cultural property constitute a precondition for Poland joining the EU.

In any case, as legal experts in both countries have pointed out, the question of private property rights is not provided for by the Maastricht treaty.

The Social Democrat candidate for the post of German chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, visited Warsaw in June to reassure the Poles about his intentions in the likely event of his being elected. He confirmed that refugees' claims did not "influence German foreign policy".



The Papal Cross in Auschwitz, in Poland, erected in 1988 at the spot where Pope John Paul II prayed for Nazi victims PHOTO: ROMAN KOSZOWSKI

His words were well received. The friction of the past few months has caused irritation rather than any genuine fears. But a feeling of disquiet has lingered.

The deportees' claims and the way in which electoral capital has been made out of the issue by certain German politicians were supplemented by media comment. This included an article in Der Spiegel magazine contending that Poland was behaving in such a way as to corroborate the arguments of those who oppose EU enlargement, while opinion polls appeared showing that the German public — unlike the government — was broadly hostile to enlargement, and especially to Poland's inclusion.

The Poles were also worried by the far right's success at local elections in former East Germany, and the prospect of Chancellor Helmut Kohl — regarded until recently as the greatest champion of EU enlargement eastwards — being defeated by the Social Democrats, who are not too fondly remembered in Warsaw because of the way they cosied up to the communist regime during the eighties.

None of this represents a serious diplomatic crisis. But as Janusz Reiter, a former Polish ambassador in Bonn, has noted, it has proved that "Polish-German relations, while good, are also superficial". Or, if one prefers the terms used by a Christian Democrat spokesman, Karl Lamers, those relations are currently being "put to the test of time".

That test will be all the more crucial because, as the long march by Poland and other candidate countries towards EU membership now looks steeper than expected, what Warsaw will need above all is lasting German support.

(July 26-27)

Rightwing priest held over scout tragedy

Martine Valo

"THE boat containing the seven children first capsized between 1pm and 2pm. After that they simply drifted tragically until their craft was found at daybreak," said Philippe Astruc, the deputy public prosecutor in Guingamp. The boating accident he was describing, which occurred off the Brittany coast on July 22, resulted in the death of four boy scouts and one rescuer.

As their vessel was battered repeatedly in heavy seas — bad weather had been forecast — the youngsters, aged between 12 and 16, were plunged into the icy water. By the time a yacht spotted their third and last distress signal they were "exhausted, frozen and terrified", Astruc said. It was then that one of the yacht's three-man crew, 30-year-old Guillaume Castanet, was hit by a boom and fell to his death in the sea.

The seven teenagers, none of whom had a sailing certificate and whose sailing dinghy was supposed to take a crew of no more than six, were navigating "without any form of supervision, and without any adult or following vessel", Astruc added.

The tragedy began on July 20, when four dinghies accompanied by a launch set off from Perros-Guirec on a sailing expedition. One crew overshot their destination, camped overnight at Port-Béni, and were ordered to sail back next day. They were prevented from doing so by strong currents and had to turn back.

On the following day their scoutmaster, Father Jean-Yves Cottard — who belongs to the Association des Scouts et Guides Catholiques de France (ASGCF), a far-right group — ordered them to try again, even though he was aware that a gale had been forecast. The scouts were expected back at about 3pm, but Cottard did not alert the sea rescue centre at Corsen until 9.53pm.

The ASGCF is guided by the principles of the late Monsignor Marcel Lefebvre, the traditionalist priest excommunicated by the Pope in 1988. After the accident, the mainstream Scouts de France association quickly dissociated itself from the "iron discipline" and "paramilitary practices" of the ASGCF, which is not recognised by the sports and youth ministry.

"If they have departed this world, it's because it was His will," said the 21-year-old head of a scout camp sympathetic to the views of the ASGCF in southern Brittany who had come to visit the temporary morgue set up for the dead scouts in Perros-Guirec. The tragedy was not going to change his own leadership methods, he said. Did he espouse Lefebvre's ideas? "Affirmative!" he replied, stiffening to attention.

On July 24 Cottard was charged with manslaughter and held on remand. His case will not be helped by the fact that last year he received a warning from the sports and youth ministry for allowing minors to go sailing without qualified instructors.

The parents of three of the dead scouts asked the authorities to release Cottard so that he could officiate at the funeral. Their request was rejected. The mother of the rescuer who died says she will join in the public prosecutor's court action so that her son will not have died "in vain". She says she cannot understand how the victims' parents could "excuse" the man she sees as "truly responsible".

(July 25, 26-27 and 28)

It's time to talk about euthanasia

EDITORIAL

IT WAS revealed last week that a 28-year-old nurse had been charged on July 8 with the "murder" — the term "euthanasia" does not exist in the French penal code — of 30 patients at a hospital in Mantes-la-Jolie near Paris, over an 18-month period.

Twenty-four years ago a British doctor, George Brown Mair, caused an outcry when he published Confessions Of A Surgeon, in which he admitted to killing about 20 patients during his career. He argued that in certain well-defined cases euthanasia was a blessing, and claimed that a large number of other doctors had secretly acted in the same way.

Many doctors and nurses — both before and after Mair's book — have described how they wrestled with their consciences when faced with the extreme pain suffered by terminally ill patients.

The Mantes-la-Jolie case once again raises the question of how death is handled by hospitals. It underscores the need to adopt a collective approach to terminal illness, such as setting up groups in which doctors, nurses, auxiliary nurses and psychologists can exchange views.

Nurses, who are the main link in communicating with patients, need to be provided with an environment in which they can pass on to doctors any requests by patients or their relatives to be allowed to participate in the decision as to whether or not to continue treatment.

The euthanasia debate, which is fraught with complexities, should not be confused with the question of palliative care. It is universally agreed that every hospital should have a unit that allows people to die humanely and without pain.

Similarly, to improve the conditions under which people die at home, doctors and nurses should be better trained to deal with the terminally ill and encouraged to take part in "palliative care networks".

So should we go a step further and decriminalise euthanasia? Notwithstanding all the safeguards that would certainly be required, the real danger would be that euthanasia might very well become a routine practice in the case of certain categories of people, mainly the old and disabled.

The Mantes-la-Jolie case is exceptional because of the number of patients involved, and also because it has been made public. By being an exception to the rule, it also shows that few complaints are lodged in France against the practice of euthanasia.

(July 28)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
August 9 1998

Hun Sen Pressures Rivals to Concede

Keith B. Richburg
in Phnom Penh

CAMBODIAN Prime Minister Hun Sen, whose party is the apparent winner of last month's parliamentary elections, stepped up pressure on his rivals to concede defeat and join him in a new ruling coalition. He warned last weekend that a new government should be formed as quickly as possible to allow King Norodom Sihanouk, the country's revered monarch, to travel abroad for medical treatment.

In a further bid to gain international acceptance and legitimacy, Hun Sen announced the capture of one of Cambodia's most sought-after fugitives, Noun Caet, a Khmer Rouge commander wanted in the kidnapping and slayings of three Western backpackers four years ago.

The three tourists, a Briton, an Australian and a Frenchman, were abducted after a Khmer Rouge raid on a passenger train in July 1994, and the government negotiated for their release for two months. Their bodies were found in shallow graves in October 1994, after a government offensive overran Noun Caet's guerrilla redoubt on Vine Mountain in Kampot province, 150 miles south of Phnom Penh. The three apparently had been bludgeoned one month before the bodies were found.

The National Election Commission had promised to have final results last weekend, but delayed releasing those figures until this week, citing administrative difficulties in the cumbersome counting process. But the tally of the independent electoral watchdog group called Comfrel, or the Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia, showed Hun Sen and his formerly Communist Cambodian People's Party far ahead of a crowded field, with 41.4 percent of the vote. That would translate into at least 64 seats in the 122-seat National Assembly.

In second place, according to the unofficial Comfrel results, is the royalist Funcinpec party of Sihanouk's son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, with 32.2 percent of the vote, followed by the Sam Rainsy Party, led by the popular former finance minister of the same name, with 14.4 percent. The remainder of the vote was divided among smaller parties.

Ranariddh and Sam Rainsy have refused to accept the results, saying they have evidence of massive fraud. Comfrel and other observers have said their complaints should be investigated, but they doubted the result would be affected even if the alleged problems are verified.

In the 1993 elections held under U.N. supervision with thousands of peacekeeping troops on the ground, the Cambodian People's Party won 38 percent of the popular vote, second to Funcinpec, which won 45 percent.

This year — despite its control over the election process, and the security forces — the Cambodian People's Party improved its performance by only three percentage points. But the Funcinpec vote dropped this year, with most of the loss going to Sam Rainsy's party.

Ranariddh kicked Sam Rainsy out of Funcinpec in 1995 because of the former finance minister's complaints about corruption. The two have been enemies since.

Hun Sen, who is in a position to dictate the terms of Cambodia's next coalition government with himself at the head, repeated his appeals for his two main rivals to accept the result and join him in a unity cabinet. He said Sihanouk is ill and must travel to Beijing for medical treatment and that the longer politicians continued bickering, the longer the king will have to wait to formalize the government.

RIOT police clash with thousands of protesters — mostly students, trade unionists and members of Brazil's radical landless movement — outside Rio de Janeiro's stock exchange last week after the government sold its controlling interest in Telebras, the national telephone company, for $19.2 billion, writes *Anthony Faiola in Buenos Aires*.

The Brazilian government created 12 "Baby Bras" out of Telebras for sale to a number of bidders, including MCI Communications Corp. which paid $2.3 billion for Embratel, the long-distance operation.

The sale was considered the cornerstone of an effort by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso to complete the transformation of the world's eighth-largest economy into a free-market system.

The auction was also viewed as a bellwether of economic confidence in Latin America, boosting its long-term viability as an alternative to Asia.



It's Time to Tell the Truth, Mr. President

OPINION
Richard Cohen

ON THE day Monica Lewinsky and Ken Starr reached a deal, I watched many television news shows. All of them referred to Lewinsky, to Starr, to Bill Clinton and some supporting characters on the White House staff, but not one of them paused, as they usually do with a big story, to explain what this all meant to you and me. This White House scandal is about sex, lying and the delusional stupidity that comes from an overdose of "Hail to the Chief," but not — everyone seems to think — about anything that, come to think of it, matters very much. It is just another show on television.

That, though, is not my view, but I can understand if most people feel differently. The news that Lewinsky will purportedly testify that she had sex with the president falls into the pope-is-Catholic category. Didn't we know that? Even the further new that she and Clinton purportedly talked about how to keep their little secret a little secret is not exactly a revelation, either. I expected no less.

So, in a sense, nothing has changed since that dark day in January when it was revealed that Starr was investigating the Lewinsky "matter." That being the case, you are excused for thinking that none of this has anything to do with anything that might, in the least, affect your life. The market goes up, the market goes down and this investigation goes on and on.

And yet, like some disease you don't know you have, this investigation is tearing at the innards of our governmental system. Because Ken Starr doesn't know the difference between a misdemeanor and a war crime and because Bill Clinton has been as well-served by his willingness to lie as he has by his manifold political talents, we have had some discouraging developments.

The president is now saying he will present videotaped testimony to Starr on August 17. He will be taped in the White House with his lawyer present — hardly a typical witness to say the least. But he agreed to this compromise only after Starr had subpoenaed him.

Something may happen to abort the August 17 date and the Supreme Court may yet have to decide whether a president can be forced to testify before a grand jury and if he can be indicted. All things considered, it is better that this question not be answered. A constitutional crisis — should it come to that — ought to be about something momentous. Not this — this tawdry scandal about sex.

It is Clinton who prolongs this thing. It is the president who delays, who plays out the clock — one time-out after another. It is he who has damaged the presidency with which he was entrusted. Little by little he has tossed out one presidential perquisite after another to trip up Starr but the man keeps coming. It is time — past time, actually — to tell the truth.

Do it, Mr. President. Get this thing over with so we can all move on. The International Monetary Fund is bleeding, Japan is sinking, Russia is going broke and Social Security needs fixing. The lies that accompany extramarital sex like barnacles on a ship are understandable. We are all, since January, French. We will not be shocked. We cannot condone perjury by a president, but as a nation we are not likely to support impeachment based on a crime many of us would have committed. We cannot approve, but we can all understand.

But the speech Clinton needs to give, he will probably never give. The lie is his best friend, his true amigo. It has gotten him out of many a jam. Embrace the lie, he purportedly told Lewinsky. Be true to the lie, he told Gennifer Flowers. Lie about the Vietnam War draft and smoking dope and, just the other day, how pleased you were that Lewinsky had made a deal with Starr. Enough!

Vacuum at The Heart of Government

EDITORIAL

A CONGRESS that has spent all year carefully accomplishing almost nothing is leaving town for a month's vacation. The Senate began its August recess last week; the House is to follow this week. Having killed tobacco legislation, danced around campaign reform, sidestepped the managed-care question, brushed aside the president's child-care proposals and failed to agree on a budget for the fiscal year ahead — well, they need the rest.

The two houses are to return in September, meet for a month and adjourn for the fall campaign. Much of that time will have to be spent on the appropriations to keep the government operating in the fiscal year beginning October 1. The House has passed most of the 13 bills and has time remaining this week, but the Senate has passed only half, and then the competing versions must go to conference. The administration has threatened to veto the main domestic bills.

The disputes have partly to do with money; Congress failed to adopt some administration proposals that would have eased the appropriations caps. But even harder are the policy questions. The administration wants to use sampling and other statistical techniques to reduce the undercount in the next census; the Republican congressional leadership does not. To help shore up weak Asian and other economies, customers for U.S. goods, the administration wants to replenish the International Monetary Fund; Republicans insist on attaching conditions. House Republicans want to make lower-middle-income families eligible for subsidized housing units that the administration wants to reserve for the poor. The leaders are thinking of trying to solve these and a lengthy list of lesser problems in one giant appropriations bill at session's end. What an exit that will be.

They plan as well to hold a vote at least in the House on a tax cut that they haven't figured out a way to pay for, and to bring back the trade bill that split the Democrats last year and that they hope will do so again. The Democrats should confound their critics and help pass a trade bill. But a tax cut would be a huge mistake, once again an effort to buy this generation's votes at the next generation's expense.

They did pass a highway bill, but what Congress can't pass a budget-busting public-works bill in an election year? They voted to modernize the Internal Revenue Service as well, but a vote against the tax collector is not a high-risk act either. And before they're done, they'll reduce the interest rates that students pay on loans.

You look in vain for much else. It isn't over yet, but thus far this is a Congress memorable not for what it has done, but for what it hasn't.

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Land of the Damned

COMMENT
Jim Hoagland

FAMINE able to kill hundreds of thousands of people again stalks the southern Sudan, the setting for an international horror story that has no end. That a killing famine strikes anywhere in this era of global plenty is shocking. That it strikes again — and again — in exactly the same place is outrageous, and sinister.

For nearly 40 years the African tribes who inhabit the Sudan's remote grasslands crossed by the Nile as it flows north to Egypt have undergone mass death by hunger once or twice a decade. In 1989, at least a quarter of a million people starved to death in the equatorial region of Africa's largest country.

The southern Sudan is a land of the damned, a land of people abused by cruel rulers, beaten down by harsh weather and terrain, and neglected by international political forces indifferent to their plight.

But there is something else at work in this horror story. Could famine exist in the Sudan on a regular basis because the Sudan exists in the geographic and political form created by colonial authorities and turned over to their local allies when the time to return to Europe came?

At the political heart of the repeated tragedy of the southern Sudan is the human heart, and its capacity for callousness toward those of other races, religions and cultures.

The people of the South starve in part because the rulers in the distant North do not consider them people. These African tribes are pawns, problems, or enemies as circumstances change; but they never have been participatory members of the society run by the Arabized, Islamic political powers of Khartoum.

The governments that have held power since the British left in 1956 have been unwilling to take the expensive, difficult steps needed to prevent or reduce the South's vulnerability. Such steps would include stockpiling buffer food supplies in the region, arranging standby transportation networks for use when crops fail, or reaching a political settlement that would end the guerrilla war that has ravaged the South.

Over the past 15 years, more than 1.5 million have died from fighting and two major famines in the Sudan. The Western political response to the post-independence disaster is a simplistic, Band-Aid approach. The racial and religious differences that divide the North and South have often been treated by Washington and other capitals as an invitation to meddle and to seek temporary advantage by aiding a variety of guerrilla warlords in the South.

But what if the problem is a deeper one than the nature and survivability of that unsavory regime? What if this dilemma goes to the heart of the international system that emerged, more haphazardly than we like to acknowledge, with the creation of the United Nations and the collapse of the European colonial empires after World War II?

What if the Sudan as it exists today is a historical mistake? How does the international community acknowledge and rectify a mistake of that enormity, so it does not have to stand helpless every five years before the mute, uncomprehending stares of a new crowd of dying children on the world's front pages and television screens?

To raise such questions is to engage in political heresy in the present international system. I harbor no illusion that the United Nations and its member states are about to re-examine their responsibilities, powers and history because there is one more famine in the Sudan.

But they should. Only when the empowered of the world open themselves to new thinking and new questions about the effectiveness and human costs of the system they run will they move to change it, for the better.



A nurse holds a child's hand at a hospital in Wau, southern Sudan PHOTOGRAPH: ERIC FEFERBERG

White House Planning Saddam's Fall

Thomas W. Lippman

DIRECTED by Congress to pursue more vigorous efforts to bring down Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the Clinton administration has responded with a detailed, 27-page plan to rebuild Iraq's shattered political opposition and prepare a case for a possible war crimes indictment of Iraqi leaders.

The plan calls for spending $5 million, which Congress has already made available, to train opposition groups in organizing and recruitment techniques, to fund a center for exile activities in London, and translate and index millions of captured Iraqi documents for possible use as evidence in war crimes prosecution.

An additional $5 million has been used to establish an anti-Saddam "Radio Free Iraq," run by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and housed in Prague.

Senior officials also hinted that a parallel and possibly more ambitious covert effort to subvert the regime in Baghdad is under development. They said they have no illusions that their plan will put an early end to Saddam's regime, but said they want to support and unify the Iraqi opposition in hopes of fostering an orderly transition to democracy should Saddam fall.

To help implement the program, the administration has invited the two leaders of rival Kurdish factions in Northern Iraq — Masud Barzani of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and Jalal Talabani of the Popular Union of Kurdistan — to visit Washington later this year.

Both are damaged goods politically: Barzani because he allied his forces with Saddam's army during his 1996 conflict with Talabani in an operation that led to the destruction of a CIA-backed opposition movement inside Iraq; and Talabani because he accepted support from Iran in that conflict. But administration officials said they have no choice but to deal with the Kurdish leaders.

"As long as they are prepared to oppose Saddam Hussein, we are prepared to work with them," Assistant Secretary of State Martin S. Indyk told reporters last week.

"We do it with our eyes open and with a realistic understanding of the way in which in that part of the world, alliances can shift."

Kurdish leaders also have reason to be mistrustful of the United States, a senior administration official said, because of their sense that Washington encouraged them to rebel against Baghdad after the 1991 Persian Gulf War and then failed to help them.

Whether Barzani will come to Washington and embrace the plan is unclear. His nephew, Farid Barzani, who represents the KDP in Washington, said, "We don't mind joining the [Iraqi Arab] opposition, but only on condition that the Americans would support the Kurdish people against any regional power," meaning against Tehran as well as Baghdad.

Castro Hailed as Hero On Tour of Caribbean

Serge F. Kovaleski in St. George's, Grenada

FIFTEEN years after U.S. Marines invaded this tiny island nation to oust his forces, Cuban President Fidel Castro triumphantly arrived here last Sunday in a visit replete with irony and a defiance toward the United States that has been his trademark since the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s.

The Communist leader's two-day stay in Grenada will conclude a week-long, three-nation Caribbean tour aimed at strengthening political and economic relations with his smaller neighbors and further circumventing U.S. efforts to isolate Cuba through a long-standing embargo and diplomatic pressure imposed on other governments.

Symbolically, Castro's maiden visit to this island of 90,000 people in the eastern Caribbean has been viewed with much anticipation, given that during the October 1983 invasion under then-President Reagan, it was the site of the only direct military clash between U.S. and Cuban forces. Two dozen Cubans, including several construction workers who tried to repel the incursion, died in the two weeks of fighting, as did 18 Americans and 45 Grenadians.

Upon arriving at Port Salines International Airport to a full military salute and hundreds of chanting Grenadians waving Cuban flags amid chants of "Fidel!," Castro, who turns 72 this month and was clad in army fatigues, unveiled a bronze plaque inside the terminal honoring the workers. They were killed while helping build the airport at the time of the invasion.

In discussing the visit, which has drawn disapproval from the United States and others, Grenadian Prime Minister Keith Mitchell, once a Castro critic, said, "Our initiative to strengthen ties to Cuba is not meant as anti-anyone at all. It is clearly in the interest of Grenada. Also, it is important in the Caribbean context."

Castro's success in fortifying relations with Caribbean neighbors that previously shunned Cuba largely reflects a profound sentiment among them that the United States has increasingly neglected the region's interests in the post-Cold War era.

U.S. aid to the Caribbean has fallen an estimated 25 percent in five years, from $183 million in 1993 to $137 million last year. Observers noted that the United States has also imperiled the region's crucial banana industry by convincing the World Trade Organization to rule that European preferences for Caribbean bananas violated free-trade rules. Meanwhile, Cuba — the largest Caribbean country and one that continues to attract much European investment, though it suffers grinding poverty and food shortages — has increased its regional donations from an estimated $5 million three years ago to as much as $25 million, according to experts.

Moreover, Cuban is providing experts, scholarships and medical care to help its neighbors, most of whom are small, poor states.

In relation to the United States, another analyst said of Castro's Caribbean tour, "This is the in-your-face tour, particularly the trip to Grenada. It is vintage Fidel. At every step he is portraying himself as the savior and protector of the little man against the 'imperialist' interests of the United States. That is why he still wears his uniform, because it signifies that the revolution is not over."

GM Has Uphill Battle Despite Union Deal

Martha M. Hamilton and Beth Burkstrand

UNION workers at two General Motors Corp. plants approved greements last week to end a two-nonth strike that crippled the auto naker's North American producon and led to layoffs of almost 00,000 workers. But analysts said ne end of the United Auto Workers trike doesn't mean the end to GM's roubles.

Although autoworkers agreed to ome productivity increases, the nation's leading automaker still faces a big disadvantage compared with its competitors when it comes to costs.

"When you look at what we've accomplished over the past few years, it's been very substantial," said GM spokesman Bill Noack. "The problem is, the rest of the automotive world is moving too."

As a result of the settlement, GM can at least get its plants back to work, removing the threat that the strike might have posed to the company's planned introduction of completely redesigned full-sized pickup trucks. GM has spent five years and $5 billion on the 1999 version of the Silverado and Sierra pickups.

A recent report highlighted GM's problems compared with its competitors. A manufacturing analysis by Harbour and Associates, Inc., a consulting firm that specializes in manufacturing productivity, found that GM had the highest North American labor costs among the U.S. Big Three automakers — $2,000 a vehicle, compared with $1,957 for Chrysler, and $1,493 for Ford.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY August 9 1998

Bones at atrocity sites help rewrite Guatemalan history, writes **Molly Moore** in Belen

Dead Men Do Tell Tales

SKULL by cracked skull, rib by splintered rib, the bones of Guatemala's dead are exposing past the living long feared bare. In a dusty pit behind a rmer military post in this southern atemalan farm settlement, the t-encrusted remains of a man ho disappeared two decades ago cently revealed his story for the st time to a team of forensic thropologists excavating history th shovels and brushes.

Hands trussed behind his back, e man was shot and stuffed into a e with three other victims. Asilants then sprayed the bodies th the 5.56mm bullets used in the -16 rifles that are standard issue the Guatemalan army.

"Let the evidence — let the bones talk," said Fredy A. Peccerelli, of the Guatemalan Forensic thropology Foundation, which is onicling 36 years of civil war ities using the crushed skulls, fragments and machete-ed spinal columns exhumed m dozens of clandestine graves ss Guatemala. "We're only transg what the bones are saying."

The tales the bones tell are iting modern Guatemalan hisy and propelling the nation into first public discussion of an era ch savage persecution and r — largely at the hands of rnment forces — that an entire ration of Guatemalans considd the events almost unspeake even within their own families.

Dozens of massacre sites, and usands of interviews with war ivors, willing for the first time escribe the murders and disarances they witnessed, Guatea is confronting its brutal past. ny Guatemalans view the painful airing as the first step toward ling the wounds inflicted by a r in which human rights organias estimate 100,000 people re killed and 40,000 more disared. Most of those killed were combatants.

"The book of Guatemalan history s blank pages," said Edmond let, an opposition politician who ed as Guatemala's ambassador the United States during the final ars of the war, which ended with signing of peace accords months ago. "It's important to fill e pages, to know what happened so we can try to avoid it ever happening again."

While limited exhumations of mass graves and burial pits began in 1991, the scope and intensity of the operations has surged since the government and leftist guerrillas agreed to a formal peace that included the formation of a Commission for Historical Clarification to catalogue war abuses. As it is, three teams of forensic anthropologists — medical examiners of the long dead — lack the manpower and money to respond to more than a fraction of the requests they receive to unearth potential sites.

"If graves were mines, we would be afraid to walk in Guatemala," said Peccerelli, whose team has excavated 37 grave sites among the hundreds of clandestine cemeteries he and others believed to exist throughout the country.

As a child, Peccerelli was one of the tens of thousands of Guatemalans who fled during the war. Raised in the Bronx, he had graduated from college with a degree in anthropology when he happened upon a seminar about the excavations. In 1995 — 15 years after he left home — Peccerelli returned to help uncover the past.

The exhumations and their scientific confirmations of war atrocities have been politically explosive in a nation where many of those responsible for wartime abuses remain in powerful government or military positions. Although government military and paramilitary forces are blamed for most of the civilian murders and massacres, anthropology teams have uncovered the graves of victims of guerrillas as well.

When anthropologists began their exhumations, army officials declared the skeletons the victims of earthquakes. Guatemalan newspapers published no stories about their work. But, as the crowds swelled at the excavation sites and more villagers told their horrific stories, the nation took notice.

"When you've hidden secrets for years and years, the truth is going to heal your wounds," said Karen Fischer, one of Guatemala's leading human rights activists.

The Guatemalan army still refuses to discuss the findings and has been criticized for not turning over larger and more significant volumes of documents to the truth commission, which is compiling a report scheduled to be completed later this year.

Hector Mauricio Lopez Bonilla, a retired lieutenant colonel who is now working as a private business consultant and newspaper columnist, is one of the few military officials who has been willing to address the atrocities, blaming them on individual field commanders and units fighting a war in which "the entire populations of villages were involved" in protecting or supporting rebels. He added, however, that while the circumstances of the war may "explain why events occurred, that does not justify them."

Today, with each grave that is unearthed, another sliver of history is unmasked.

On March 13, 1982, in the central Guatemalan village of Rio Negro, army troops and members of paramilitary civil patrols rounded up 77 women and 100 children, raped many of the women, grabbed the children by their arms and feet and smashed their heads against the rocks, then dumped 159 corpses into a rocky ravine, according to testimony provided during investigations and forensic examinations that backed up the statements.

IN SOME villages where massacres occurred, graves have been easy to locate because surviving relatives have been sneaking to the sites for more than two decades, secretly leaving flowers, crosses and burning candles, to memorialize the dead.

But the clandestine burial sites behind the once-isolated military post in the southern village of Belen were more difficult to find. Villagers told anthropologists that in the early 1980s — during the worst years of the civil war — soldiers at the encampment frequently nabbed men from public buses that passed nearby. In addition, men throughout the area allegedly were abducted from their homes by soldiers and never seen again. One villager mentioned that when the base closed after two years, he spotted empty trenches in the cow pasture behind the prefabricated building deserted by the military.

With those vague directions, Peccerelli's team began digging.



Forensic anthropologist Fredy A. Peccerelli, left, and Gordon Morton uncover bones in one of many secret civil war graves PHOTO: MOLLY MOORE

And, as with every other exhumation site, the crowds appeared: Guatemalans, most of them of Mayan descent, coming to confront their past, to search for missing loved ones, or simply to be a part of the reconstruction of history.

Many arrive clutching tattered photographs of relatives. "We've suspected what went on here for years," said Cecilia Ramos, who stood in the sweltering heat of the cow pasture with dozens of other villagers. "But nobody could say anything bad against the army."

"My husband was kidnapped on May 5, 1981," said Cruce Morales, 75. "I never saw him again.. Even today, I can remember exactly what he was wearing — his shirt, his tan pants, the handkerchief the soldiers put over his eyes."

Some of the hundreds of bodies uncovered in mass graves and individual sites have been identified by relatives who said they recognized the shreds of faded clothing that still cling to the skeletal parts. Forensic anthropologists — many of whom have been asked to assist in exhumations in Bosnia, Croatia, Rwanda and other locales because of the experience they have gained here — are attempting to identify others by matching DNA found in the pulp of corpses' teeth with samples taken from villagers.

"We believe our work has helped to change Guatemala," said Peccerelli. "These people were dealt a double injustice. Their people were killed, and they were never allowed the chance to give them a proper burial."

The Germans Have a Word for It

William Drozdiak in Berlin

FOR many Germans as well as foreigners, the struggle to earn the language of Goethe and Schiller is a lifetime challenge. The countless rules that shape grammar, the tricky tasks of where to place umlauts and hyphens, and the literally breathtaking feat of uttering compound words like *Genehmigungsverfahrensbeschleuningsgesetz* (the word for a recent law on industrial projects) can foil the most talented linguist.

Feeling some sympathy, culture ministers from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, along with representatives from German-speaking regions in Italy and Eastern Europe, decided two years ago on an array of reforms designed to simplify the German language.

The agreement was hailed as a major breakthrough.

But the ministers did not reckon with the notorious Teutonic resistance to change. Parents, politicians and leading writers mounted a legal campaign to block changes they said were frivolous and confusing. Opinion surveys showed that only 12 percent of the population thought that changing the rules to make the German language more simple and consistent was a good idea.

Germany's highest court has stepped into the fray. In an attempt to settle an argument that some editorialists said was turning the country into a laughingstock, the constitutional court in Karlsruhe declared that the reforms were valid and should take effect this month — just in time for the new academic year.

But opponents of the new rules have not abandoned their fight. They are taking their campaign to the ballot box. They have gathered enough signatures to hold a referendum in the state of Schleswig-Holstein this autumn that would overturn the reforms — and possibly lead to other electoral challenges in many of Germany's 16 states.

Rolf Groeschner, a law professor at Jena University who is one of the leaders of the anti-reform drive, deplored the government's role in dictating the rules for German, which he described as a basic part of people's identity that had evolved naturally over the centuries. Groeschner said: "Bureaucrats have no business telling the German people how to write."

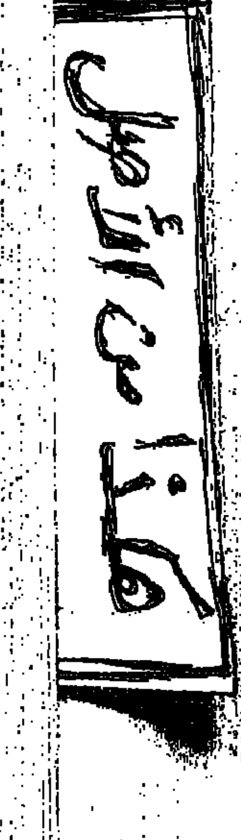
The reforms are hardly revolutionary. They would reduce the number of spelling rules from 212 to 112 and the rules governing the use of a comma in a sentence from 52 to nine. Only 185 of the 12,000 German words in common parlance would be affected. The quirky "double ss" that looks like a capital B would be eliminated (although not in all cases), as would many hyphens. Many compound words — the kind that Mark Twain described as "alphabetical processions: you can see the banners and hear the music" — would be split.

But other changes have been attacked as ludicrous and impractical. Foreign words will be Germanized, meaning that the pasta will now be spelled *Spagetti* and the tomato condiment will be *Ketschup*. Government statements will be known as *Kommunikees*.

Educators and schoolbook publishers, who invested nearly $200 million in making the prescribed changes, greeted the court's decision with relief. Some of the publishers had warned they would go bankrupt if they were compelled to reverse the reforms after undertaking such expensive alterations.

Teachers sought to assure parents and students that the linguistic adaptations would not be difficult to carry out. "The verdict creates clarity for many unsettled pupils, parents and teachers," said Wolfgang Lieb, chairman of the conference of state education ministers.

The language war has been cited by commentators as yet another sign of Germany's reluctance to accept change. Indeed, the refusal to accept reforms in many areas was voted recently by the nation's journalists to be the most significant phenomenon in Germany over the past year. As might be expected, the Germans have a word for it — *Reformstau* — a reform logjam.



Windows on the World

Rob Pegoraro

BARBARIANS LED BY BILL GATES
Microsoft From the Inside: How The World's Richest Corporation Wields Its Power
By Jennifer Edstrom and Marlin Eller
Henry Holt. 256 pp. $23

CYBER RIGHTS
Defending Free Speech In the Digital Age
By Mike Godwin.
Times Books. 333 pp. $27.50

TO DO anything on the Internet, you have to communicate effectively via the written word, so why have so many books about the Net been written by journalists or other observers, as opposed to the people who actually did the work? These two books from industry veterans tilt that balance in the other direction. But the first of the two to hit bookstores, Edstrom and Eller's Barbarians Led By Bill Gates, does a better job of arguing that sometimes history is better off not left to those who helped make it.

The two authors' thin volume argues that Microsoft isn't the omnipotent, omnivorous capitalist force it appears to be; rather, it more often succeeds by accident as it lurches drunkenly from strategy to strategy. In other words, it is — are you sitting down? — a normal company. Barbarians is blessed with ridiculously good timing, having arrived just as the Justice Department sued Microsoft for allegedly violating the Sherman Antitrust Act, but cursed with a clumsy structure and spotty writing.

Edstrom, a journalist, is the daughter of Microsoft uber-flack Pamela Edstrom; Eller worked at Microsoft for 13 years. They haven't produced any big insights, but they do deliver some highly entertaining anecdotes about Microsoft's messy process of advance, retreat, reorganize, debug, then advance in a different direction. One development head calls another's group "chimps," while Bill Gates curses out his minions: "Why am I paying you people salaries?" The writing crackles with cutting, cunning descriptions: A meeting between competing user-interface development teams is "like a multi-ethnic family reunion in Sarajevo."

But conflicts are overridden by Microsoft's corporate survival instinct: "Kill anyone trying to take that [Windows] revenue away." A revelatory chapter describes how Microsoft succeeded in crushing a foundling competitor in the "pen computing" market, in which electronic pens and tablets were to replace keyboards.

The last third of the book aims to prove that Microsoft's weaving of its Internet Explorer browser software into Windows was basically a matter of expediency and dumb luck. But these chapters, with their duller, largely quote-driven style, might as well have been stapled on. Eller had left the company before most of these events took place, apparently leaving Edstrom to do most of the work. Although convincing, this stuff is not much better than reading back copies of trade publications.

By contrast, Godwin — staff counsel for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a leading online civil-liberties lobby — has delivered a much more substantive work in Cyber Rights. Godwin is a True Believer in the idea that "the world of the networks is a true democracy: your influence is measured not by wealth or position, but by how well you write and reason."

With this, he argues, comes the potential for new, more democratic communities to arise online. The book's heart is its extended recounting of two related episodes: the trumped-up study of cyberporn that Time magazine turned into a lurid cover story in 1995, and the fight to undo the Communications Decency Act over the next two years

After Time's Internet-pornography story broke, Godwin and a small squad of academics and journalists scrambled to document the crippling flaws in the study — and to persuade the media to report them instead of uncritically quoting the study. This man-versus-magazine story is fascinating read. His and others' debunking efforts sounds like trying to steer a supertanker with a sailboat — but it worked. Time ran a retraction of the story weeks later.

Congress, however, was not dissuaded and passed the Communications Decency Act, banning "indecent" speech online. The EFF, the American Civil Liberties Union and several other parties promptly sued to block its implementation. Godwin ably outlines such relevant issues as the different legal meanings of "indecent" and "obscene" and the principles behind government regulation of such media as radio and TV, then goes on to explain the important parts of the various judicial opinions that killed the act.

But what's really memorable about these closing chapters is Godwin's own reaction, after weeks of anxious waiting, upon hearing the Supreme Court's ruling that struck down the CDA: He breaks down crying as he writes a speech. The legal principles he discusses in the book might seem like abstract stuff, but, as he shows, they're plugged into some deep parts of people's lives.

Weaving a Magic Spell

Susan Dodd

ON THE OCCASION OF MY LAST AFTERNOON
By Kaye Gibbons
Putnam. 273 pp. $22.95



ILLUSTRATION: JILL KARLA SCHWARZ

I HAVE never quite outgrown my love of fairy tales. I hope I never do. There is something wondrously satisfying about a story where the hero's heart and the heroine's beauty are as pure as driven snow, where the obstacles are there for the surmounting and villainy is allowed to be pluperfectly vile.

On The Occasion Of My Last Afternoon is set in the 19th-century South, but Kaye Gibbons has so lightened the historical novel's accustomed weight as to send it soaring into the fairy tale's realms of plumb bewitchment. The story's heroine is everything a fairy tale princess should be — pretty, put-upon and plucky. Emma Garnet is the eldest daughter of Samuel Tate, a self-made Virginia plantation lord who could, for boorishness and brutishness, rival Faulkner's low-downest Snopes. Samuel's wife is a delicate, long-suffering woman whose clandestine affections offer her numerous children little protection. It is immediately clear that the Tate household lives in a habitual state of siege, and that Emma Garnet will be smart enough to get out the second the getting is good.

As the novel opens, Samuel has murdered a slave named Jacob for daring to suggest that his master's method of pig-slaughtering lacked finesse. For a few nightmarish pages, it appears the Tate family is about to be massacred by enraged slaves. In fine fairy tale fashion, however, this crisis cues the entrance of a sorely needed fairy godmother. Clarice, a free woman of color, has long been the saving grace of the hellish Tate household in general and of Emma Garnet in particular. As befits a fairy godmother's station, Clarice is warm and fierce, cheeky and wise. With a young Emma Garnet as prop and apprentice, Clarice proceeds to whip up a smooth concoction of bribery, voodoo, tough love, and theater to pour over the hot coals of revolt, which scarcely sizzle going out.

This wily and devoted good witch, Clarice, endows our heroine with "the living sense, the core of knowledge about the way the world works." Of course, a discerning reader may notice that manipulation is the first fundamental of this sentimental education. But in a fairy godmother's responsible hands, manipulation is exercised solely for Right and Good. Suffice it to say that in short order (but not before considerable anguish, loss, and advanced training in pro bono manipulation), Emma Garnet's escape from the wicked father's castle is, with Clarice's help, brought to pass by the appearance of a veritable prince.

Quincy Lowell (of the Boston Lowells, naturally) is beyond charming: He is a doctor. Need one add that he is also handsome, well-to-do and well-connected and stout-hearted and right-thinking? Quincy is pleased to have Clarice tag along on the honeymoon and right into the happily-ever-after. Now Emma Garnet has two tutors to help her make sense of the world. She proves an apt pupil at Quincy's knee: In a wink they share three little girls and strong abolitionist convictions. Alas, Clarice's sway has a slightly weaker hold: Teaching our princess to cook is a feat she's still trying to manage from her deathbed.

Ah, but there is ever so much more to the tale: the tragic loss of Emma Garnet's beloved brother, a sister's metamorphosis from spoiled debutante into angel of mercy, the knotty secrets Clarice must untangle before she dies, Samuel's ultimate comeuppance, the Civil War ... so much more.

Like many of the very best fairy tales, On The Occasion Of My Last Afternoon is at heart a love story. By the time Emma Garnet Tate Lowell offers her remarkable, if somewhat fanciful, accounting of her life, she is a widow and grandmother, a self-possessed woman whose proudest achievement is having made and kept, against dire odds, a home that has been "a sanctuary ... a museum of delight." If she's a little shy of humility, who can blame her? The resourceful and appealing young girl we first met never claimed to be perfect. Indeed, the display of Emma Garnet's flaws is one of the novel's delights.

FOR smart and plucky as she is, our princess is also spoiled, self-absorbed, self-righteous, sentimental, catty, even vindictive. Well, we like our fairy tale princesses lightly salted and spiced with flavors reminiscent of our own. And we remain partial, a lot of us, to the notion that love is apt to bring out the best in anybody, even a princess.

Kaye Gibbons is too savvy, too contemporary, and too good a storyteller, though, to content herself with a happily-ever-after life. Instead, what her diverting tale suggests is how a life lived in love and service might carry a woman close to wisdom, and that a happily-ever-after death could turn out to be more than just a fairy tale.

As the Brothers Grimm were wont to say, "Wouldn't it be pretty to think so?"

This Year in Jerusalem

Beryl Lieff Benderly

APPLES FROM THE DESERT
Selected Stories
By Savyon Liebrecht
Feminist Press at the City University of New York. 240 pp. $19.95

HAVING a state, Theodor Herzl and other early Zionists predicted, would make the Jews a "normal" people. A tribe of wanderers, who for two millennia had lived on sufferance in other people's countries, would once again become citizens in their own land, free of the agony and neuroses bred by exile.

In these wonderful short stories, Savyon Liebrecht, born in the same year as the State of Israel, explores what it means to be normal in that "normal" nation. An exact contemporary of the soldiers who recaptured Jerusalem after nearly 2,000 years, she belongs to the first post-biblical Jewish generation to live their whole lives in a world with a Jewish state. As the daughter of secular, Ashkenazi (Central or Eastern European) parents, Liebrecht fits easily into her country's educated, modern, Westernized upper stratum, which, like all ruling classes, pays too little attention to the needs and sensibilities of those in the lower pecking order.

But Liebrecht, who was not born in Israel, knows that her generation, like the new nation-state they inherited, cannot so easily escape its history. Her parents met in Europe as Displaced Persons. Like many others who had survived the death camps, they immediately married and began a family to replace the lives and relatives annihilated by the Germans. Bringing Liebrecht, their infant first-born, from Germany to Israel, they proceeded to shelter their new family from the horrors they had known. Again, like many others, they did so through silence, saying nothing of their pre-war lives and wartime suffering. Their memories came out only in sleeping nightmares and waking fears that still deeply mark those so dearly protected children.

Liebrecht plumbs these many profound and painful themes beautifully, affectingly, and engagingly. She recognizes young Israelis' need to encapsulate a hideous past in monuments and ritual commemorations and why survivors need to... date that past, give it some human meaning, to express to descendants who have never known hunger or mass murder how that inexpressible reality felt. She explores with searing and exquisite poignancy the struggle within families to come to terms with what those memories mean.

Despite the European past, however, Israel not only ingathered exiles born in German-speaking cities and Russian-Polish towns but also those from non-Western places like Yemen, Libya and Kurdistan, many of whom brought customs and outlooks closer to those of the medieval Middle East than to the salons of Vienna. Young Israelis, though, often disregard such differences when they choose their lovers and spouses. Still the differences endure, able to distort and even poison relationships among in-laws, neighbors, and fellow citizens. "Written in Stone" delicately draws the painful misunderstanding and ultimate redemptive reconciliation between a young, secular, Ashkenazi widow and her traditional Oriental mother-in-law.

And, of course, when the early Zionists joined their brethren in their Promised Land, they found members of another people also in residence, and not particularly happy to receive them. "A Room on the Roof" and "The Road to Cedar City" shrewdly plumb the hurtful complications of living beside a feared and hostile subject people.

Most Israelis are thoroughgoing secularists, but many sincerely — and increasingly strictly — follow various forms of Orthodoxy. The book's title piece, "Apples from the Desert," tells the story of an Orthodox mother's trip to a secular kibbutz in the arid Negev to rescue a daughter she believes was lured by a secular man to a life of sin.

Though resonant with deep philosophical and social themes, this book teems not with images or ideologies but with rich, exciting, believable stories. Liebrecht offers no literary tricks, ideological positions or special pleading, just engrossing and skillful tales that take you, through the lives of real people, to the heart of their emotional and moral being.

You can save lives and money when charity begins at Net access. **John Keeble** reports on moves to attract surfers

Called to account by e-mail

WHEN the man was arrested, he was in immediate danger of being tortured and killed. But a few hours later he was kicked out of the police station in Turkey after being told that he was a favourite of Amnesty International. He had been saved by a surge of e-mails and faxes to government offices, enough not only to embarrass the authorities but also to threaten the IT and telecommunications networks with overload.

Mobilising campaigners to turn the electronic spotlight on oppressive regimes is one of the many benefits expected by Amnesty International as it signed up its first recruits last month as an Internet service provider.

Christian Aid is leading the charity ISP field with 1,500 inquiries already for its SurfAid service; and Crusaid, the HIV/Aids group, is on the slipway.

Moves to offer political and personal expression through the choice of ISP are becoming more common. Names that would once have been regarded as strange ISPs, such as Tesco and the Nationwide Building Society, are joining the fray.

Organisations are expanding affinity marketing — the term used for sales to members or supporters by selling mainstream ISP access as their own brands, with software designed to default to their information pages on the Web.

Christian Aid became the first well-known charity to become an ISP, six months ago. SurfAid, operated by Global Internet, an ISP based in London, earns the charity $20 a year per Net member, with $11,500 made so far.

The sum represents 16.6 per cent of the amount spent by those who sign up with SurfAid, says John Ranford of Christian Aid. "It is a very generous amount, which we have ring-fenced for Christian Aid. We also get help with promoting the service.

"There are not enough people online in Britain yet to make fundraising effective," he said. "But the number of older and female users coming on line is growing very fast and that is making a big difference to us. We have started to compile a list of warm contacts — or supporters — who can be encouraged to campaign, but we do not have enough yet."

Amnesty and Crusaid have signed up with Affinity Access, an operation based in London and started by Miriam Hughesman, a former journalist on the Financial Times. Affinity worked out a deal with Uunet UK, which leases access to its Internet hardware and offers a discount to charities, giving a return of $25 per Net member in the first year and $30 per member in subsequent years.

Amnesty sees the Net link as increasing the involvement of its supporters, providing a way for them to express their commitment, opening a cheap channel for information, increasing its funds and boosting its urgent e-mail campaigning. "The first few hours or days is the period when prisoners are most likely to be tortured or killed," said Ray Mitchell, an Amnesty urgent action co-ordinator.

"We can send out the information by e-mail to people who can then respond by e-mail. This speedy response saves lives, stops people being tortured and allows people to reappear when they have been "disappeared".

Georgina Harman, the appeals manager of Crusaid, said she was looking to the ISP deal to combat public apathy towards HIV and Aids, and to provide a source for information as well as a way of raising new finance. "We will also be telling people what they can do to help and asking for donations," said Harman. "The scheme will give us the names of supporters who can be e-mailed directly and incredibly cheaply. The long-term implications are phenomenal."

Research into profiles of charity members and supporters showed a good fit with Internet interests, says Hughesman. Bringing them together is likely to be an accelerating process, she says: Affinity is looking to sign up 5,000 Net users by next July, through charities alone.

For Amnesty International, its new service is being put to immediate use. Last week, for example, a campaign was waged through its e-mail service to protect members of the K'inal Antzetik women's group in Chiapas, southern Mexico, who have received death threats from paramilitaries.



Charity ISPs can hold the key to freedom

For more information in the UK: Amnesty International: 0800 3281756; www.amnesty.org.uk. SurfAid: 0870 9071000; www.surfaid.org. Crusaid: 0171 8333939; www.crusaid.org.uk. Affinity Access: 0800 3281756

North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission

NAMMCO

GENERAL SECRETARY

The North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) invites applications for the position of General Secretary at the NAMMCO Secretariat in Tromsø, Norway.

NAMMCO is an inter-governmental body established in 1992 with the purpose of contributing, through regional consultation and cooperation, to the conservation, rational management and study of marine mammals in the North Atlantic. Member countries of the Commission are Norway, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. The NAMMCO Secretariat currently has a permanent staff of three. The official working language of NAMMCO is English.

The General Secretary is responsible to the members of the Commission for the coordination and administration of its work, including the preparation and administration of annual meetings and the Commission's published Annual Reports and is also responsible for maintaining contacts with other relevant international organisations and non-member governments. The position involves a minimum of three weeks overseas travel per year in connection with meetings and other events.

The successful candidate should have: a higher university degree in a relevant field of study; working experience with, and an excellent understanding of, international cooperation in the field of conservation and management of natural resources; excellent communication skills and fluency in written and spoken English, as well as experience with the preparation and editing in English of reports and publications. A working knowledge of a Scandinavian language would be an advantage; experience in administrative leadership.

The position of General Secretary is for a four-year period, with the possibility of extension at the end of this term. The salary, which is currently subject to national income tax in Norway, will be commensurate with the qualifications required of the position and in line with salaries for similar posts in other international organisations.

Written applications, together with a curriculum vitae and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of three referees, should be sent by mail, addressed to the Chairman of the Council, NAMMCO, c/o University of Tromsø, N-9037 Tromsø, Norway and postmarked no later than Friday 28 August 1998.

Further information on the position can be obtained from the present General Secretary, Ms Kate Sanderson (Tel. +47 77 64 59 08; E-mail: nammco-sec@nammco.no), and the Chairman of the Council, Mr Arnór Halldórsson of the Ministry of Fisheries in Iceland (Tel. +354 560 96 70; E-mail: arnor@hafro.is).

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is seeking to fill the management position of SPHERE PROJECT MANAGER. *(phase II of the Sphere Project): Steering Committee for humanitarian Response/InterAction which is based in Geneva.*

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Please post, fax or e-mail your CV to our consultant Susan Holliday, Charity Recruitment, 40 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4RN. Fax: 0171 833 0188. E-mail: sh@charityrec.source.co.uk The closing date is Friday 11 September 1998.

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Eastern Africa Regional Office

IUCN
The World Conservation Union

SENIOR TECHNICAL ADVISOR (STA)

Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia

IUCN is providing technical support to the Ethiopian Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation (MEDaC), Environmental Protection Authority (EPA and Regional Administration to implement Phase III of the Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia (CSE) Project. The major goal of this project phase is to enhance the enabling environment for effective implementation of the CSE and the Regional Conservation Strategies (RCS). This will be done through increasing the environmental management capacity and the capacity to integrate environmental concerns into the development process at all levels. IUCN is urgently seeking an experienced professional to assist build capacity of the Regional and other Institutions in the use of tools and methods for implementing the CSE and RCS.

The STA should have:

- At least a Masters degree in Environmental Planning and/or Natural Resources Management;
- A minimum five years experience in environmental planning and management, preferably in Africa;
- Experience and skills in some of the following areas: environmental assessment, environmental economics, environmental information management, monitoring and assessment methods;
- Demonstrated skills in training, facilitation, extension and communications;
- Excellent interpersonal skills and an ability to organise and motivate others.
- Some experience in project management will be an added advantage;
- Fluency in written and spoken English.

Interested professionals should submit their CV to:
The Regional Representative, IUCN-EARO, P.O. Box 68200, Nairobi Kenya, Fax. 254-2-890615/890407, by 22nd Aug. 1998.
If you do not hear from us by 1st Oct. 1998, consider your application unsuccessful.

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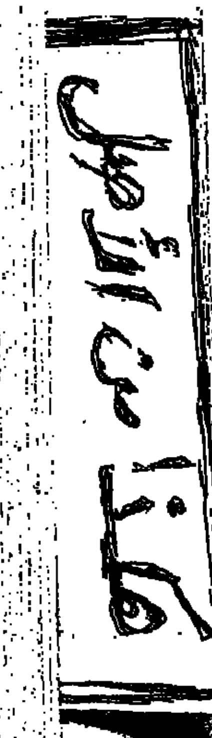
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Dance master

Jerome Robbins

JEROME ROBBINS, who has died aged 79, was considered the best — some would say the only — American-born classical choreographer. He also choreographed, and sometimes directed, some of the most popular and revered American musical comedies, including On The Town, The King And I, Peter Pan, Gypsy, and his two most famous, West Side Story and Fiddler On The Roof. He was associated with the New York City Ballet from 1948. As an artist he was driven, always working, usually on multiple projects. He was an uncompromising perfectionist.

His works were innovative, even experimental, yet he understood the theatre and its popular audience, and never forgot that his most important task was to put on a show. He was a magnificent storyteller, and his musicals were masterpieces of organisation: he had an instinctive feel for the proper balance of singing, dancing, and drama, and the shows he directed were propelled by an internal engine that kept them airtight and the action inevitable.

Robbins was born Jerome Rabinowitz in New York City. The family changed the name to the more American-sounding Robbins in the 1940s. His father, Harry, ran a delicatessen and later became a corset manufacturer. Robbins attended high school in Weehawken, New Jersey. He and his sister Sonia were given the cultural enrichments of the American middle class of that time, which included piano lessons and, for his sister, modern dance.

Robbins attended New York university for a short period in 1935, intending to major in chemistry, but a slump in the family's fortunes forced him to withdraw, and he became more and more interested in dance and theatre. He studied at the Dance Center in Manhattan, taking classes with such modern dancers as Gluck Sandor and Felicia Sorel. Through Gluck, who also was involved in theatre, Robbins started acting, taking small roles in plays and dancing in the chorus of Broadway musicals.

Robbins joined the fledgling Ballet Theater (later American Ballet Theater) for its second season (1940-41) and was an important part of that company's most fertile creative period. He began in the corps de ballet, but was soon given solo roles, dancing in Antony Tudor's Romeo And Juliet, Leonide Massine's Aleko, David Lichine's Helen Of Troy, and Michael Fokine's Bluebeard. He was best known for his comic roles.

American ballet was heavily influenced by the Ballets Russe during the 1940s, when repertoires were mostly composed of hits of the great Diaghilev company. A steady diet of dancing happy peasants in ersatz Russian folk ballets was the major impetus that led Robbins to create his first ballet, Fancy Free, set to music by the then-unknown composer Leonard Bernstein. Arguably the greatest first ballet ever made, Fancy Free — the story of three young sailors on shore-leave during wartime; it was made in 1944, at the height of American involvement in the second world war — was an instant hit. It has become a modern-day classic and remains one of the few really good comic ballets.

Fancy Free launched Robbins's Broadway career, becoming a musical comedy, On The Town, which in turn became a Hollywood movie.



Robbins: uncompromising perfectionist PHOTOGRAPH TONY PRIME

Robbins dominated American musical theatre for the next two decades, although his Broadway career ran parallel to his work as a ballet dancer, choreographer and company director. For Broadway, he choreographed Billion Dollar Baby (1945), High Button Shoes (1947), Look Ma', I'm Dancing (on which he also collaborated as writer and director with George Abbott; 1948), Miss Liberty (1949), Call Me Madam (1950), The King And I (1951), Two's Company (1952) and Wonderful Town (1953).

In 1954 he was co-director of The Pajama Game. That year he both choreographed and directed Peter Pan, which starred Mary Martin and Cyril Ritchard. In 1959, he directed and choreographed Gypsy. His two most popular and enduring musicals, West Side Story (1957) and Fiddler On The Roof (1964), were ones in which he had almost complete control. Jerome Robbins' Broadway, in 1989, was his last Broadway show.

Robbins kept a foot firmly in the ballet world throughout his career. When presenting the Kennedy Center Honors Award to Alexandra Danilova, he said, in a charming speech, that it was watching Danilova dance that had made him realise the expressive possibilities of classical dancing.

In 1948 Robbins joined the New York City Ballet at George Balanchine's invitation as both dancer and associate artistic director. There he created a few roles, most notably the title part in Balanchine's Tyl Ulenspiegel, but quickly began to make his mark as a choreographer. His first ballets were experimental, even avant-garde. This was a period when ballet seemed to be in competition with both the ghost of the Ballets Russe and the presence of a vibrant modern dance scene, in which most ballet choreographers were trying to make works that would be judged "relevant" in the nuclear age.

Robbins glorified the American teenager in his work, but working with real American teenagers in the dance studio was another story. He was known as a hard taskmaster, and had no patience for anyone who fell below the highest standard. Unlike most contemporary choreographers who improvise in the studio, Robbins arrived knowing exactly what he wanted, down to the last step.

If a dancer could not do the step, he either learned it or lost the role. Where Robbins was sometimes indecisive was in matters of casting, and he was famous for choosing a group of dancers and making each learn all the roles, though not making the final casting decision until shortly before the premiere.

Robbins maintained this demand for perfection until the end of his life. He seldom let his ballets be danced by any company besides the New York City Ballet (except for the Paris Opera Ballet). In the 10 years since Balanchine's death, when there has been much grumbling about the state of disrepair of the Balanchine repertory in American dance circles, Robbins's ballets were maintained in pristine condition. Although he had been quite ill for some time before his death, he continued to conduct rehearsals and continued to create. His last ballet was Brandenburgs two seasons ago; last year he staged his version of Stravinsky's Les Noces.

Jerome Robbins is survived by his sister Sonia Cullinen, 15 musicals and 66 ballets.

Alexandra Tomalonis

Jerome Robbins (Rabinowitz), choreographer and director, born October 11, 1918; died July 29, 1998

CLASSIFIED

Marriage of convenience

Mark Cocker

IN WINTER the conifer plantations just north of Norwich, known as Horsford Woods, are a rather cheerless landscape. Blocks of regimented pine are crisscrossed by a confusing network of rectilinear fire-breaks. The densely knit trees press down on the earth like a blanket and the only thing to break their stifling silence is the occasional, alarming crackle of gunfire from a distant rifle range. But in high summer Horsford takes on a different character. The rides become brilliant avenues of heathland in bloom, and sheltered from the wind and warmed by the hothouse effect of enclosing pines, these corridors have a protected atmosphere perfect for insects.

When we visited we found many butterflies drifting among the magenta patches of flowering heather. But Horsford's main attraction is a single species called the silver-studded blue, which is lilac above with an elaborate pointilist's design in black, orange and white on the underwing. It lives in colonies sometimes numbering many thousands. These local concentrations can give an impression of abundance, but the silver-studded blue is one of Britain's rarest butterflies, occupying only one-fifth of its former range.

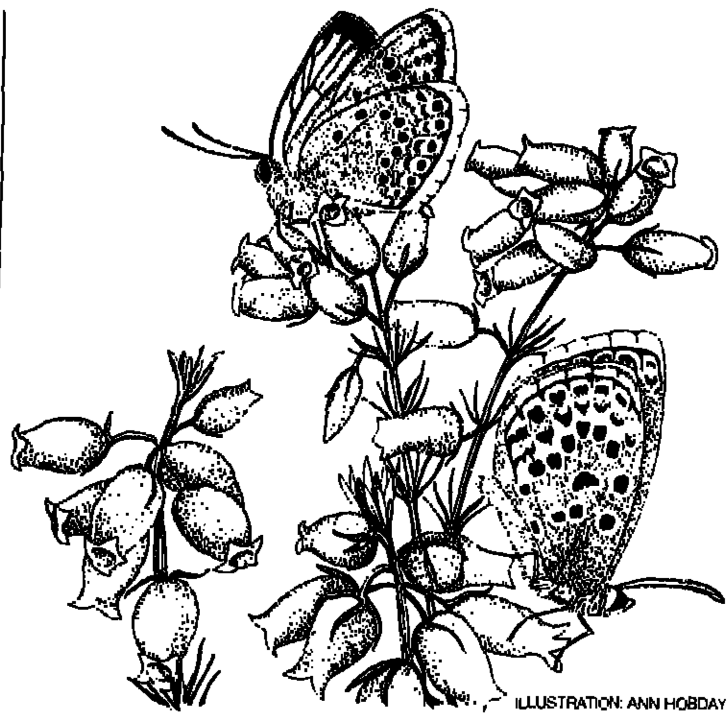


ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY

The butterfly's decline mirrored the general disappearance of British heathland this century, but the precise factors behind its ailing fortunes remained largely a mystery. While much heathland had gone, considerable areas remained. Yet the butterfly seemed to be concentrated at just a few scattered sites and it seemed unable to move from these to neighbouring areas that looked equally suitable.

Ecological studies in East Anglia and North Wales have now revealed an extraordinary relationship between the butterfly and another creature that may hold the key to this recent past, and also to a brighter future. The other half of this symbiosis is the black ant. It had long been known that ants "farm" several types of insects, rather like a dairy herd, for their sweet liquid secretions. The caterpillars of several blue butterflies are tended in this way, but no such partnership had been witnessed in the silver-studded blue.

However, it appears that black ants also find and guard silver-studded blue eggs, then carry off the larvae to place them on their foodplant, all the while stroking them to stimulate production of the honey-dew. When the chrysalis eventually develops it is carried inside the ants nest where they have occasionally been found lined up in rows along passages and brood chambers like ripening cheeses. Once the adult is due to emerge in midsummer the ants carry it to a suitable spot, tending and protecting it during this highly vulnerable phase, before the imago embarks on its brief life.

The degree of reliance of one upon the other seems uncanny. For instance when reared in captivity without ants, silver-studded blue larvae produce such a volume of sticky secretion that they often go mouldy and die. It also seems likely that silver-studded blues can only recolonise areas equally suitable for their ant hosts, and it is the ants requirement for areas of bare ground — where the spring sunshine warms their nests — that determines the butterfly's distribution. Where the heathland vegetation is too overgrown, both the insects and their invertebrate livestock are evicted.

This extraordinary evolutionary marriage between ant and butterfly raises the seductive possibility of a new *ménage à trois* with humans as the third party. This is already taking place on some Norfolk heathlands. Environmentalists are clearing over-long vegetation to leave the ground ideal for ant nests; then they introduce a small population of silver-studded blues, which will hopefully thrive in the tender loving care of their ranching partners.

Chess Leonard Barden

DANNY GORMALLY, the 22-year-old from Lewisham, Kent, scored his best result so far to share first prize at last month's Politiken Cup in Copenhagen. Gormally finished level with four strong Scandinavians and confirmed his reputation as one of Britain's fastest improving players. He was never discovered as a junior, but still rapidly became an IM and pushed his Fide rating above 2,400.

Gormally has a streetwise, combative style whose strength is the middle game, and in this win from the tournament in Copenhagen he stakes out the uncastled white king in mid-board, finishing with the rare delicacy for master chess of an actual checkmate.

P Larsen v D Gormally

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 e3 a6 A fashionable alternative to the routine e6 or dxc4. Black keeps the tension, is ready to push b5, and can guard his weak b7 pawn by the unusual method shown at move 7.

5 c5 Bf5 6 Nh4?! This and the next few moves trigger White's eventual defeat, as chasing the bishop weakens the WK. The formation Be2, 0-0, Ne5, f4 and a later g4 is more natural.

Bg4 7 Qb3 Ra7 8 h3 Bh5 9 f4 e6 10 g4 Ne4 11 Nf3 White's *en prise* knight has to retreat. **Bg6 12 Bg2 Ng3 13 Rg1 Nd7 14 Nc3 Be7 15 Bd2 0-0 16 Kf2** Abandoning the right to castle. 16 0-0-0 carries risks like Qa5 17 Na4?? Ne2 mate.

Ne4+ 17 Nxe4 dxe4 18 Ne5 Nxe5 19 fxe5 Bxc5 Potting a pawn (20 dxc5 Qxd2+) . . .

20 Qc2 Bxd4 . . . and another (21 exd4 e3+)

21 Bxe4 Bxe5 22 Rad1 f5 23 Qc5 White could resign, but co-operates in a self-mate. **fxe4+ 24 Kg2 Qh4 25 Be1 Qf6 26 Qxa7 Qf3 mate.**

Another British success last month came at San Francisco, where Julian Hodgson led from the start and won this energetic attack en route to first prize.

J Hodgson v S Atalik

1 b3 d5 2 Bb2 c5 3 e3 a6 4 … **Nc6 5 d4 Bg4 6 dxc5** Qa5 … **Nbd2 Nf6 8 a3 Qxc5 9** b4 Q… **10 c4 e6 11 Qa4 Be7** 12 … **Nb8 13 Ne5 Bf5 14** bxa6 … **Nbd7 15 c5 Qc7 16 g4** Bc… **Qxc2 Nxe5 18 axb7** Rb8 … **Bb5+ Kf8 20 g5 Ne4 21** N… **dxe4 22 Qxe4 Nf3+ 23** … **Rxb7 24 Kxf3 Rxb5 25** Be5 Q… **26 Rab1 f6 27 gxf6 Resigns.** gxf6 28 Rxb5 Qxb5 29 Rb1 wins.

No 2535

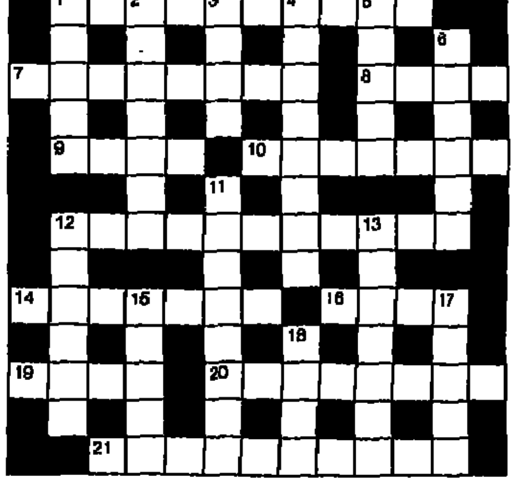
Frank Marshall v Henry Atkins, US v Britain cable match 1903. Marshall was US champion for a record 27 years, Atkins won the British … eight times. Under pressure … Black's tripled queen and r… Marshall found an ingenious … fence, offering a knight by his … move b2-b3.

Atkins (Black, to play) had to choose among (a) Rxc3 (b) Rc5… (c) Qc5. One move wins, another loses, the third probably draws. Alas for the Huddersfield … master, he chose the loser. Can you do better? Cable chess allowed plenty of time, so give yourself … an-hour to solve Atkins's dilemma.

No 2534: *1 Qd7* threat 2 Bd3 Rb… Bf5 R any 4 Qa4. If *1 . . . Rxb5* 2 R… f5 3 Qd4 and if f4 4 Qa1 or R any QxR. If *1 . . . Rh1* (to meet 2 Bd3 Ra1+) 2 Bf1 Rxf1 3 Qa4. If *1 . . .* … 2 Be2! If *1 . . . Rh8* 2 Bxa6! Rxd… meet 3 Qa4+ by Kxb6) 3 Qb5.



Quick crossword no. 430



Across

1 Show dancer (6,4)
7 Instrument once used in navigation (8)
8 London cricket ground, The — (4)
9 Store for future use (4)
10 Promote — more (7)
12 Woman performing sensuous stomach movements (5,6)
14 Tumbler (7)
16 Minus (4)
19 Novel by Jane Austen (4)
20 Subordinate — of poor quality (8)
21 Regular patron of the movies (6-4)

Down

1 Morsel (5)
2 Church service book (7)
3 Tree yielding poisonous sap (4)
4 Pertaining to the throat (8)
5 Perch (5)
6 Rush headlong (6)
11 Explosive material (8)
12 Change into — suit (6)
13 Goodbye (7)
15 African ruminant mammal (5)
17 Animal track (5)
18 King famous for his dike (4)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

IF AVERAGE players had any idea how many foolish mistakes are committed at the highest levels of the game, they would be far less intimidated. I can almost hear you saying: "It's all very well for you experts, but you don't know what we average players are capable of!" Take a look at the hand below, and watch what the great ones can do. Love all, dealer North:

North
♠ 10
♥ A Q 10 8 2
♦ Q J 5 3
♣ A K 7

West
♠ A
♥ 7 6 4
♦ 10 9 6 4
♣ Q J 10 8 6

East
♠ K 8 6 5 3 2
♥ K J 9 5
♦ 2
♣ 9 5

South
♠ Q J 9 7 4
♥ 3
♦ A K 8 7
♣ 4 3 2

At one table in a match, North-South bid to a hopeless contract of six diamonds. True, there was only one top loser, but there were nothing like twelve winners, and South eventually went three down for a score of 150. "OK", you may think, "so the experts reach poor contracts from time to time, but that's nothing special." Indeed it is not — but what happened in the other room was. This was the bidding:

South	West	North	East
		1♣(1)	Dble(2)
Rdble	1♥	Pass(3)	1♠
Dble(4)	Pass	Pass	Pass

(1) A strong opening bid unrelated to clubs.
(2) Conventionally showing both major suits.
(3) North could not double one heart, since this would be for takeout in his system, so he had to pass.
(4) Unexceptional, you may think — but South was not aware that East had bid one spade, so he thought that he was doubling one heart for takeout!

The comedy continued when South made the opening lead of the ace of diamonds — if he actually were defending one heart doubled, this would of course be a lead out of turn. However, since South really was on lead, no one had any idea that he was defending the "wrong" contract. South switched to his singleton heart, North won and continued the suit, East finessed the nine and South discarded a club. East played a spade to the ace and a heart to his jack, and this time South threw a diamond. Declarer cashed the king of spades and led the king of hearts, but on this trick South chose to "discard" a spade. Since these were trumps, he had won the trick, a fact of which the rest of the table took a while to convince him.

By the time order was restored, it was too late for the defence to recover. East eventually came to two heart tricks and four spades, making his contract of one spade doubled for a score of 160 and a flat board. The scene of this fiasco? Not, as you might imagine, the beginners' class at the local club, but the World Championships in Chile 1993. Take heart, you average players. You're not nearly as bad as you think!

Letter from Maubourguet Andrew Potter

Wheels of fortune

A NEATLY typed notice from the town's mayor stuck to the glass door of the post office informed us that *la circulation* would be *bloquée* on Monday as the town was on the route of the Tour de France.

It turned out to be a sultry day. Gendarmes had erected road barriers and the obvious places to sit in the shade were already occupied by the time I got to the main square, so I chose the corner on the steps in front of the estate agent. The sky was azure, the sun scorching.

More people joined the throng. Children were given huge green cardboard hands to wave at the participants. And then the circus began — first, the police motorbikes zoomed through; then the cars of the official sponsors, some of the drivers wearing white shirts and yellow race ties. They must have been boiling. Their passengers were mostly in T-shirts and shorts. They waved to us. The large green hands waved back. The town's high street was still decked in flags with the slogan *Allez la France*, reminders of the recent World Cup.

A van drew up and the driver, a hired salesman, spoke into a hand-held microphone. We were encouraged to buy a plastic bag containing a peaked cap, a pair of sunglasses and a colour brochure of the Tour. Bronzed girls in shorts dipped into the crowd but few of us parted with our money. Minutes later a second bus appeared to tempt us with the official T-shirts. By now it was nearly three o'clock. Some people went off to buy cold drinks but I remained on the steps, not wanting to lose my strategic vantage point.

Engines roared. Heads turned. Into view came a cavalcade of noise. The show had hit town and was calling for audience participation. Those in the crowd who were forewarned worked in pairs: one the catcher, one the hoarder. For the next 45 minutes or so a procession of several kilometres in length drove slowly past, tossing freebies into the crowd. The object, it appeared, was to collect as much as possible without actually coming to blows with fellow onlookers. This region of southwest France, famous for its love of rugby, breeds youngsters well adapted to the scrummage.

I had a superb advantage. My corner spot was ideal, because the vehicles had to slow to a crawl just in front of my steps. I became a willing participant and my pockets quickly filled up.

Then in a fanfare of fading horns and sirens the long procession of hedonistic commercialism passed on to the next village. It had been fun. We all took a breather, retreated to our patch of shade and counted the booty.

I doubt that in 1903, when the Tour de France began, there was anything similar. Modern times, however, seem to dictate heavy sponsorship deals, and the promoters, who pour millions into the race, insist on getting their messages across. Unbelievably, I had 25 items in my possession at the end, including two shoulder bags, several sachets of sun lotion, three key rings, a tiny pocket calculator, a video cassette, bags of rice and arabica coffee, a chunk of cheese, sunglasses and a peach. Multiply my haul by several score for Maubourguet alone, then for each town and village along the route and you begin to comprehend the size of the commercial operation surrounding this most famous of cycle races.

I glanced at the church clock — it was a few minutes before 4pm. Twenty minutes passed. Then came a dozen men on racing bicycles, their faces concentrated. Behind them a number of cars laden with cycles and odd wheels. Five minutes of stillness. More cyclists, each wearing gaudy skin-tight apparel, dark glasses and grimaces. Their swift passage took only a few hissing seconds and they were gone. I wondered if they would ever manage to reach the mobile carnival ahead before it stops for the night. It would be a pity for them to miss the fun.

The director of Istanbul's archaeology museum shows one of the bright frescoes PHOTOGRAPH: STATON WINTER

Turks uncover hub of Byzantine rule

Chris Morris

TURKISH archaeologists in Istanbul believe they have discovered a long-lost part of history — the Grand Palace of the Byzantine Empire, which ruled much of the known world for more than 1,000 years.

The significance of the dig — which is within sight of the famed Aya Sofya, in the city's historic Sultanahmet district — was revealed after months of secret excavation and restoration.

"We began excavations in late 1997 and finished this phase in the middle of June," said Alpay Pasinli, the director of Istanbul's Museum of Archaeology. "We have a lot more work to do."

Local residents thought the small construction site was being used to repair a canal system. "It is a great discovery," said Ekrem Akurgul, a professor of archaeology. "It gives us another unique site in the heart of the city."

The archaeological team believe they may have found the palace archive where handwritten documents and icons were stored. They have also discovered vaulted corridors, a series of magnificent frescoes, and additions to the palace completed during the Ottoman era.

"The entrance is a lovely example of Ottoman architecture," Mr Pasinli said. "A narrow aisle then leads into the Byzantine section, where the walls are covered with coloured frescoes." They show vegetables and floral patterns in vivid greens, reds and yellows. Experts describe them as masterpieces in technique.

The small portion of the palace excavated so far dates from the ninth century, but construction is thought to have started 500 years earlier, when Emperor Constantine the Great inaugurated the new capital of the Roman Empire in AD 330.

For more than 1,000 years, Constantinople was one of the most powerful cities in the world. The seat of early Christianity, it was also decorated with classical monuments from across the region.

Historians believe the palace complex once contained churches, gardens and ceremonial rooms, now buried beneath a 20th century metropolis. After Constantinople was sacked by the Fourth Crusade in 1204, the palace fell into disrepair. Constantinople was finally conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, when it was renamed Istanbul.

Experts knew that the Grand Palace had once existed, but they were not able to begin excavations for many years because a prison had occupied the site. They expect to unearth much more.

A Country Diary

Richard Mabey

CHILTERNS: I hadn't been in my wood for weeks, deterred, rather pathetically, by the thought that the dripping summer might have broken its spell. Its revenge was sharp, but mercifully short. For the first hundred yards the tracks were blocked by burdocks and blackthorn runners, and in the valley where a river had once run the mud was as treacherous as quicksand. Then nature relented and I was astonished at how the wood had taken on something of the character of a rain-forest. The self-sown ashlings in what had not long ago been a clearing had put on five feet. A tall cherry had been blown down, taking some young hornbeams with it. Bright green holly shoots fingered across paths, and fern tufts came up to my waist. The place was teeming, festive, luxuriant, and, in less than a couple of months, had begun to outgrow our schemes and edge towards its own future.

But one denizen was sticking loyally to its ancestral station. The violet helleborine was poking through in deep shade by the laurel clumps. Just one shoot, exactly where it has been for the past 10 years, and at this stage looking uncannily like a cooked asparagus spear. Always the last orchid to bloom, it was a reminder that nature is a stickler for tradition as well as capriciousness.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

HOW do I get a life?

YOU are already alive, so make good use of your life. Get a job that is beneficial to society. Walk a spiritual path. Save the planet. — *Mog-Ur Kreb Dragonrider, Arch Druid, South Downs Dragon Order of Druids, West Sussex*

THE secret lies in looking beyond ourselves, rather than in seeking self-satisfaction. A lawyer once asked Jesus this very question. Prompted by Jesus, the questioner rehearsed the ancient law: love God and love your neighbour as yourself. Jesus then told the story of the Good Samaritan and said, in effect: "Do this and you will get a life." — *Michael Smith, Swaffham, Norfolk*

STOP wasting your time writing to the newspapers. — *Harvey Sanders, Sydney, Australia*

DO FISH yawn?

THE world that fish inhabit does not require them to watch cricket matches so it is unlikely they ever feel the urge to yawn. In any event they would be unable to, since yawning (a slow deep inspiration followed by a faster expiration) needs both lungs and a diaphragm — gills just wouldn't do. — *Michael Hutton, London*

IT IS said that fish have a memory of just one second. If this is true, surely they are never bored enough to yawn? — *Emma Lewis, Colchester, Essex*

THE totals given for those killed by Stalin, Mao or Pol Pot usually include deaths from starvation as a result of policy. Famines were not unusual in Britain's Indian Empire so can any imperial figures be counted among history's mass murderers?

JOHN WILSON (June 14) rightly wonders why the "man-made famine" in Bengal in 1943 constitutes one of the silences of British history. The government did order an inquiry but when proofs of the Famine Enquiry Commission Report (1945) returned from the printers, the president of the commission ordered they be destroyed. Thus history was "silenced".

Nevertheless one Commission member, Sir Manilal Nanavati, kept copies of the five-volume report, which are available to scholars in the National Archives of India. The causes of the famine are complex but the reactions of those who have read the report are unanimous. The British administration was guilty not only of "incompetence" but also of "callous disregard of duty".

Anyone interested in understanding the extent of the suffering should read Bhabani Bhattacharya's historical novel So Many Hungers (Victor Gollancz, 1947) to comprehend the devastating effects on the rural poor of Bengal. — *(Prof) Cynthia Carey, University of Paris-Dauphine, France*

"SHE'LL be coming round the mountain when she comes," promises the old song. Who was she?

ACCORDING to Carl Sandburg's The American Songbag (1927), before the song was altered by "mountaineers" and then taken over by railroad gangs it was an African-American spiritual entitled, "When the Chariot Comes".

She (the chariot) would be driven by King Jesus, would be loaded with bright angels, would neither rock nor totter, would run so level and steady, and would take us to the portals. The song virtually invites itself to be adapted to railroads, though the chariot gets lost in the transposition and leaves us with a presumably animate, mysterious She. — *Will Kelley, Chicago, USA*

Any answers?

***IS IT** really possible to break a wine glass by singing at a particular pitch and volume?* — *Phil Goddard, London*

***WHICH** was the first country, and which was the last, to give the vote to women? Have any countries always been equal in their voting rights?* — *Elaine Bray, London*

***IS THERE** any scientific evidence that ghosts exist?* — *Robert Kemp, Hong Kong*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

Fastest feet in the West

DANCE
John Cunningham

MICHAEL FLATLEY has done for Irish dance what Irish theme pubs have done for the old country's second most sacred tradition — drinking. Just as the dreary and the dowdy have been banished from bars now sporting names in Celtic script, so Flatley has given traditional dance a makeover. But he's decided to move on while he's one tap — or perhaps three — ahead, to boxing or the movies.

The 40-year-old Irish-American dancer bowed out in a techno Celtic twilight before a sell-out crowd of 25,000 in London's Hyde Park; truly, madly Flatley to the end. There was a theme of sorts in this one-off performance: the struggle between good and evil, with colleens rescued and warriors repulsed by the Lord of the Dance.

But the fans were there to see that designer-shiny torso and the fastest feet in the West. Even a sourpuss sickened by the slickness must admire the way Flatley has taken a rigid, repressed dance form and Viagra-ed it with the passion and sexual assertiveness of flamenco. But the Lord of the Golden Mane and the Silver Heels, whose black-leather-clad bottom was projected on two giant screens , still retains the grid pattern — the framework of Irish dance.

Traditionally, the upper body is held stiff as a stone saint while the thighs, knees and ankles move as if they had ball-bearings in the joints. Flatley's innovation was to dare to raise his arms; now his dancers embrace and cradle each other. The women kicked their legs and showed their modest knickers in a quasi-religious can-can. Forget Flatley's own sexual strutting, it's the sheer wholesomeness of the corps of dancers that most captivates. This show, Feet of Flames, will be the Christmas video treat for nuns everywhere.



Catrin Wyn Davies's Zerlina falls prey to Roberto Scaltriti's suave Don Giovanni PHOTO: BIG PICTURES

Don Giovanni's conquest

OPERA
Andrew Clements

IT IS 50 years since the first opera festival at Aix-en-Provence, and the anniversary has been celebrated with a total relaunch. In the early 1990s the festival began to lose its way, artistically and financially; and last year disappeared altogether. But there is a new artistic director in charge now — Stephane Lissner, who has come to Aix from the Châtelet in Paris — and the French government has handsomely supported an impressive programme of rebuilding and improvements to the theatre.

The main performances still take place out of doors, in the courtyard of the 16th century Archbishop's Palace. But new foyers have been built, the courtyard terraced to provide permanent seating, and a handsome wooden proscenium arch and orchestra pit put in place. Under the Provençal night sky it all makes a beguiling setting for opera.

Lissner has set out to preserve that special sense of place, yet is intent on looking to the future as well. To run in parallel with the starry, big-name opera productions that have always been the mainstay of Aix he has founded a European Academy of Music, at which young performers and composers can come to work with leading directors and singers.

This year the big attractions have been brand-new productions of Don Giovanni and Bluebeard Castle, both with dazzling line-ups of collaborators. Don Giovanni was directed by Peter Brook, and conducted in turn by Claudio Abbado and Daniel Harding; the Bartók was the work of choreographer Pina Bausch, with Pierre Boulez in the pit.

What Aix, like Glyndebourne or Bayreuth, can offer conductors and directors of this calibre is the opportunity to prepare performances with a care and an attention to detail that the permanent houses, with their repertory systems and travelling circuses of singers, cannot hope to match. In Don Giovanni such an approach certainly delivered the goods: in the standards of singing and playing, and in the astonishing acting that Brook had drawn from his casts (two of them alternating performances), it is hard to imagine how this show could have been bettered anywhere in the operatic world.

Abbado gave the opening night of the production to the 23-year-old Harding. Reports on his reading suggested it was the more fiery and impulsive, yet at the performance I heard it was Abbado, utterly compelling and masterful in every respect. He always let the music breathe, was always there when the singers needed him, always found the expressive space they required. At the same time he obtained the most ravishing and powerfully dramatic playing from the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. It was an object lesson in what a great opera conductor, who knows his craft inside out, can achieve under optimum conditions.

But if Abbado's contribution was stamped with uniqueness from the very opening bars of the overture, the special qualities of Brook's staging took much longer to manifest themselves. It began almost casually, with the protagonists sitting around on the wooden benches of Tom Pye's economical set, and only gradually stirred into dramatic life. Throughout the first act there was little whiff of danger, no sexual charge, hardly a dash of humour.

For Brook this story of rape, murder and retribution isn't a laughing matter even if Mozart and Da Ponte called it a *dramma giocoso*.

Yet what Brook did create with his young cast was a wonderfully fine-grained study in relationships, in acting of a detail and conviction which opera constantly aspires to but all too rarely achieves. Some of the great theatrical set-pieces may have been understated, but the fixation was with what was left unsaid. For Brook the pivotal moment in the opera is the graveyard scene when the statue of the Commendatore comes to life. For the suave, plausible Don Giovanni of Roberto Scaltriti, a man who until that point had been able to walk away from whatever havoc he has wrought in other peoples' lives, it was the watershed, the realisation that he has gone too far. From that point he was unhinged, and the final supper scene became a litany of compulsive behaviour as Giovanni waited, terrified, for the inevitable to happen.

And then for the first time in the whole evening came the laughs — desperate ones, sparked by the remarkable performance of the Leporello, Nicola Ulivieri, as if there had to be something human to hold on to as events moved supernaturally out of control. The balance was perfectly judged.

But if the Don Giovanni was the kind of operatic experience that comes along once in a decade, Bluebeard's Castle was a sad disappointment. Pina Bausch's manic, overpopulated choreographic conception seemed totally at odds with the piece's dark, claustrophobic intensity. With the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester, Boulez conducted his usual lucid, powerful account of the score, and the soloists — László Polgar, the definitive Bluebeard of our time, and the Lithuanian-born Violetta Urmana as Judith — could hardly have been bettered.

But their quiet intensity was consistently overwhelmed by the hyperactive inconsequence of the production, which began with the sound of a helicopter and aerial shots of mountainous wastes projected over the white walls of Peter Pabst's bare set, and maintained that level of rude intrusiveness. Whenever the tempo increased dancers would dash madly about, exhausting the audience as much as themselves, and certainly failing to get grips with the core of the drama.

Well, that's poetry that is

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

WHEN Rita (Barbara Knox) was an exotic dancer and nightclub canary, Alec (Roy Barraclough) was her agent. With a better agent, she might have got on TV and been famous. As it was, she stayed in Coronation Street (ITV).

She married Len, who died in a car crash while running away with another woman; then Alan, who chased her along Blackpool prom with a breadknife until he was flattened by a tram; then Ted, who died during a game of bowls. Bowls being the kind of game it is, no one noticed for a while.

Many women would have been disheartened, but this is par for the course in the Street. Rita, game girl, kept going. For years now she has been quietly pioneering the use of sequins on sweaters and working on a patent for inflatable hair.

Last week, after 25 years, Alec proposed. (To put you in the picture, he recently found Rita in a coma, gassed by an ill-fitted fire. Since then she has been looking distrait in a peach peignoir and he has been looking, if anything, distraiter.)

"Mek it quick, Alec," said Rita. Romeo would have been discouraged. Most scenes in Coronation Street are very quick — a minute or less. Alec's proposal took about five.

He said: "All them hours, sitting by your bed in that hospital, watching you breathe, wondering if the next one was going to be your last. I thought, 'I've suddenly found what I want and it's too late.' I'm trying to say I love you, Rita, and I want to marry you. I know I've no right to expect you to feel the same way. After all, what am I? Just a lonely man with any good years left in him long since gone, but at least I've told you how I feel. There's nowt left unsaid."

"You love me?" said Rita getting her incredulity in edgeways.

"Yes, I think so. I've never had much to do with it before."

Anyone who had a heart would have taken the poor thing in and given it a saucer of milk. Rita turned him down like a bedspread.

"No, Alec!" she said loftily. "Marriage isn't just about love. It's about trust as well. And there isn't a bone in your body I could trust."

I was forcibly reminded of Bertie Wooster, who said, "There can be no love where there is not Perfect Trust." "Who told you that?" asked Nobby Hopwood suspiciously. And, indeed, you do suspect Bertie, whose head is there mostly to keep his ears from banging together, must have found it in a cracker.

You may have wondered why In the Footsteps of Alexander the Great (BBC2) is called that. It's because his car broke down, that's why.

In Kabul, Michael Wood fell into the hands of car dealers. He inspected the Land Rover doubtfully. It was covered with dust and sacks. He himself was now so windswept and sand-blasted that he looked like Shaggy from Scooby Doo. "Do you think we'll get all the way up the Panjshir with this?"

No problem, guv'nor. Used only by Fatima to collect the milk in the morning. So off they jolly well went.

The Panjshir is a pass through the 6,500-metre mountains of the Hindu Kush. The country was precipitous. Torrents roared in ravines. The Land Rover began to labour. "We've developed a very bad clonking noise," said Wood, sparing us the technicalities.

When Wood reached the foot of the pass, a horse trader was waiting. He had a lovely wavy beard, as if crimped by tongs. Asked for the hire of a horse, he pinched the bridge of his nose thoughtfully. Then he spoke, "Sixty thousand Afghanis, but, as you are our guest, we will give you a discount. Fifty thousand."

This was downright moving. It was the veritable language of the Romford Road heard in the Hindu Kush. As the thrush sings the same song everywhere, so does the car salesman.

We met the close relations of the horse trader in Confessions of a Car Salesman (BBC1). George Cole narrated, naturally.

The most endearing was 70-year-old "Lucky" Jim of Guarantee Lucky Motors. Presumably you are lucky if they start ("It's going through a new MOT. We've got the failure note on it"). Jim lurks at the door of his garage like an elderly conger eel in a cardigan. He is treated as something of a pet by his landlord, Jag Sandhu. "We love him, actually. He comes and tells us all the stories what happened in the past. He knows every trick in the book. I don't think there'll be another. He's the original east London car dealer."

Jim's patter is along these lines: "If a husband-and-wife team come along, if they're English, got a sense of humour, I say, 'I'll take your missus as a deposit. Are her big ends OK? Does she need a rebore?' With a smile on my face, of course. Breaks the ice."

It won't make a pennyworth of difference in the end.

Welcome to the dream factory

PERFORMANCE
Lyn Gardner

IT'S LIKE a resurrection, as if the building has come alive. In an abandoned convent off London's busy Holloway Road, ghosts begin to stir. The corridors have sprouted grass and pebbles, a phone rings in a distant room and, in a flooded Victorian schoolroom, a lady teacher wrestles with a typewriter.

Dreamwork lives up to its name. It is an LWT Talent Challenge project involving 100 or so young people who have worked in small groups with a range of companies — the London Symphony Orchestra, Theatre de Complicite, Black Theatre Co-op and Green Candle Dance Company.

Part installation and part performance, it takes place in different rooms and spaces all over the school, taking you on a labyrinthine journey into the unknown and the strangely familiar. It has the knack of being surreal and touching at the same time. Like dreams.

Yet, ironically, the theme from which this fantastical journey takes its inspiration is work. On entering the building you are made to sign on as if at a Job Centre. Then you are appointed a guide who, clipboard in hand, takes you on a tour of the premises as if you were a potential employee. It is a journey from the mundane to the marvellous.

In one unit there is the recreation of a 1930s office where the clock always ticks and the workers toil away filing reports. But then musical notes take over from memos, and in a twinkling the office is transformed into the set of a Hollywood musical. The shy department head and the pretty typist are suddenly Fred and Ginger, the filing clerks all glamorous hoofers.

In another unit scientists and workers are busy assembling a giant worker, an inert Gulliver who, when the alarm bell rings, suddenly comes to life. Frankenstein has his boot in the door.

One minute you find yourself being jostled and bumped as if on a crowded Tube train, the next you are on your "tea break" in a secret, buddleia-shaded garden, listening to the sound of crickets.

What makes the evening so effective is not just its imaginative scope and professionalism, but the way the theme of the project has been so completely matched to its setting. On the very simplest level, the people involved in this project are fulfilling a dream, a dream that has required immense hard work, both to stage the performance and to rescue the building from its semi-derelict fate.

In other ways it is meditation on different kinds of work and in particular on that of the Carmelite nuns who lived within these walls, their lives dedicated to labouring for souls.

But this building was also a school. Many of the participants in Dreamwork are still at school, and being a child is hard work. In one of the units you come across five ghostly performers engaged in repetitive school tasks, their aspirations projected in video footage on the back wall.

Dreamwork is, of course, also about transformations. From child to adult, from dereliction to renewal, from past to future, from one kind of performance to another.

In the evening's most exhilarating segment — performed on the balcony and in the courtyard of the convent — a group of factory workers meet for their lunch break, still bearing the weight of their drudgery in every solemn movement. Suddenly the overalls are discarded, fantasy takes over, and the dance becomes wildly celebratory. The lesson is that it is dreams, not sandwiches, that truly sustain people.

Radical meeting of Jewish souls

Daniel Libeskind, one of his generation's greatest architects, has only just completed his first work — and it's a masterpiece, writes **Jonathan Glancey**

FELIX NUSSBAUM felt the walls closing in on him from an early age. Not surprising, for this brilliant and introspective German painter happened to be born at the wrong time and in the wrong place (Osnabrück). Nussbaum was effectively sentenced to death when the [illegible] were voted into power in [illegible]. After that fateful election he went to stay for a while in Alassio, in Mussolini's Italy, and painted perhaps the most serene of his haunting canvases. Yet within months of [illegible] White Boat By A Wall and Fisherman's House, he was painting images of tragic people trapped by walls that appear to be folding in on them, squeezing them into ever-tighter corners.

This is what happened to Nussbaum and his wife Felka Platek. The dimensions of their world shrunk inexorably from 1933 to 1944. When the final betrayal came on June 20, 1944, the two were sold to the Wehrmacht and thus to the SS. They were sent to Auschwitz on the very last Nazi "transport" to leave Brussels. They arrived on August 2 and were gassed soon afterwards. The Allies invaded Normandy on July 6. The walls had closed in on Nussbaum a little too soon.

Daniel Libeskind has documented this mid-20th century tragedy in the leaning walls of his first completed building, the Felix-Nussbaum-Haus in Osnabrück, a dramatic new civic museum devoted to the work of the artist. It is a masterpiece. Libeskind has shaped a gallery that is at once highly intelligent architecture and a spatial experience as emotionally-charged and as haunting as the accusatory history and soul-searing paintings of Nussbaum.

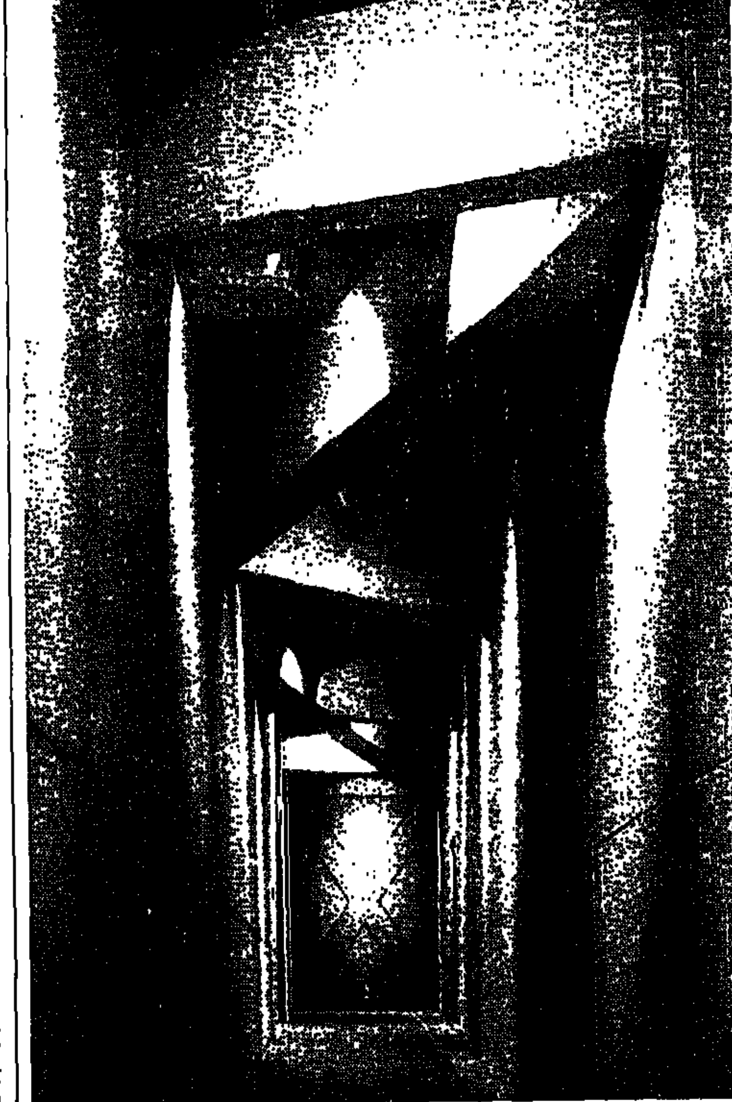


[illegible]baum's Self-portrait With [illegible]ish Identity Card

The museum, a radical extension of the chocolate-box Osnabrück Museum, is a form of architectural dialogue with the paintings hung on its walls. It is a taste, too, of what might be expected of Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin, the recently approved Imperial War Museum in Manchester, and the proposed Spiral gallery extension that he has designed for London's Victoria & Albert Museum.

The museum is a meeting and a labyrinth of walls — walls that close in on you as you walk tentatively between them, then fly away unexpectedly. This strange meeting begins the moment you enter the building from across a narrow metal bridge, through a pinch-point of tall concrete walls, a high, winding lobby and on into a dark, sloping corridor where you first meet the work of the artist before rising up to the main galleries. No architect in recent years has made such a convincing use of dark spaces and walls that defies logic and denies the need for any form of decoration.

The interior is, undoubtedly, controversial. On the day I visited with many curatorial experts from around the world, there was a lively behind-the-scenes debate among those who thought Nussbaum's work was so powerful in its own right that it might have been hung more effectively in a neutral space. What Libeskind has done, said reasoned detractors from his powerful building, is force the visitor into a recognition that Nussbaum was first and foremost a Jewish artist as opposed to a great painter, and that what appears to matter most inside the dark embrace of these walls is the retelling of the story of the destruction of German Jews and their absence from the fatherland ever since. It is a valid, if hoary, argument, but one worth debating.



The Nussbaum museum is full of odd angles and walls that set up a bizarre dialogue with old Osnabrück PHOTOS: BITTER BREDT FOTOGRAFIE

Such highly charged paintings as Self-Portrait With Jewish Identity Card (1943) would catch and hold your eye even if hung in the sort of chaste, white gallery that could be found pretty much anywhere. Yet Nussbaum's pictures are far from being neutral works of art. It is hard even in 1998 to see Nussbaum's work in a detached, curatorial way. They are charged with an anger, a loneliness and a sense of being on the wrong side of every wall that cannot easily be separated from the historical circumstance in which they were painted. Or at least not yet. The Holocaust, in historical terms, was only yesterday.

The Felix-Nussbaum-Haus is not a neutral space. Nor is it some sort of Holocaust museum. It's a meeting of two empathetic minds. This is not just because Libeskind, a Polish Jew by birth (now a US citizen), knows the cost of the Holocaust only too well, it's because he, like Nussbaum, is a secular Jew, a highly independent artist and thinker, a man who gets tangled up in the bourgeois world while wrestling to fight the stifling thing off.

More than this, the new building sets up a wider dialogue with Osnabrück itself. Libeskind's trademark angled and projecting walls fly out from behind the city's comfortable and long-established Baroque walls. His unmitigated palette of concrete, zinc and raw oak appears at first to be in snook-cocking opposition to the cream-smooth stucco, stone and render of the old town. And yet the two styles talk to one other with more than grudging respect. They even hold hands as the approaches to the new museum are intimately connected to the old museum and surrounding town. The museum, reached by footpaths that lead from two main roads, has been woven into the old fabric of Osnabrück.

This marriage with the old town is both physical and emotional. If the museum had been sited or designed so that it felt detached from the mainstream of life in the old town, it would not have told its story, nor performed its role nearly so well. That role is the reconciliation of Osnabrück to its past, when Christians and Jews lived together in comfortable bourgeois prosperity. It is significant, perhaps, that the museum, a public project, has been opened in the year of the 350th anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia, the treaty signed in Osnabrück that heralded the beginning of modern diplomacy and brought the Thirty Years War to an end.

WHAT the Nussbaum museum represents is the coming to terms of Osnabrück and the Jews who once lived there. And, of course, a recognition by the place of one of its most famous sons. The idea of dialogue underscores Libeskind's building from beginning to end. It includes not just the way that the new museum links fingers with the old town, but also its landscaping. A lawn of swivelling sunflowers — much loved by Nussbaum — is set against the uncompromising concrete walls that elide to form the main entrance to the museum.

This is a rich building achieved in simple materials. Its integrity and power to move, the tidal wave of historical and cultural resonances that flows in and out of it, have been realised at little cost ($8.5 million).

Now the British are to have a Libeskind building of their own (the Imperial War Museum in Manchester) and, with luck, the V&A will get to build its inspired Spiral extension. Libeskind's architecture is undoubtedly brave and radical, although you might find it hard to come to terms with at first. Yet its intelligence and individuality, its speaking up for culture (rather than the wilful determination of the educated bourgeois in Britain to dumb down), will win it many friends, of all cultures and all persuasions. And the dialogue between Libeskind and Nussbaum will have played a moving and creative part.

The part of his sums

Simon Singh

The Man Who Only Loved Numbers
by Paul Hoffman
Fourth Estate 301pp £12.99

PAUL ERDOS was the most prolific mathematician of the 20th century. He slept for only three hours a night, worked for 19 hours each day and published 1,500 papers, all on a constant diet of coffee and amphetamines. Erdös would often say: "A mathematician is a machine for turning coffee into theorems." Two years after the death of Erdös, Paul Hoffman has written a biography which conveys the wonder of mathematics by focusing on one of its most devoted practitioners, "a mathematical monk, who renounced physical pleasure and material possessions for an ascetic, contemplative life".

Erdös was born in Budapest on March 26, 1913, during an era when Hungary's Jewish community was home to half a dozen nascent geniuses, who would all later emigrate to the United States where they would have a dramatic scientific impact. For example, John von Neumann's ideas were central to the development of the computer, and Edward Teller was the father of the hydrogen bomb. They were forced into exile by the White Terror of Miklos Horthy, whose regime instituted the notorious Numerus Clausus in 1920 — the first major anti-Jewish legislation in postwar Europe.

Many scientists escaped to Germany, only to be exiled once again by the arrival of Hitler. Then, in the US during the McCarthy era, Erdös suffered further persecution, this time because of his collaboration with mathematicians from Red China, which meant he was denied a re-entry visa for many years. His repeated flight from oppression may have been behind his continual journeying in later life. Erdös never bought a house, but lodged with fellow mathematicians. He would search out the most interesting problems, and then turn up, often unannounced, at the home of the mathematician whom he felt could help inspire a solution. His intense work schedule would soon exhaust his initially welcoming host, whereupon he would search out another problem, and move on. His motto was "Another roof, another proof". His worldly belongings were contained in two battered suitcases.

He eventually co-authored papers with an unprecedented 485 mathematicians, all of whom are said to have an Erdös number of 1, a coveted accolade in the world of mathematics. If your Erdös number is 2, then this means that you have written a paper with someone who wrote a paper with Erdös, and so on.

The sole aim of Erdös's life was to seek out mathematical truth. Within the mathematical community, he was a single-minded giant, confronting the most profound issues in the subject. Outside it, he was a helpless child, unable to cook, drive or organise his financial affairs. He never married — indeed he never had a relationship — and once said: "Basically I have a psychological abnormality. I cannot stand sexual pleasure. It's peculiar." Even the material world held no attraction for Erdös. When he won the prestigious $50,000 Wolf Prize he kept only $720, which he required for his upkeep, and gave the rest away.

Erdös's eccentric life is an enthralling story, but, in addition, Hoffman attempts to provide some of the mathematical background, in order to give an insight into how the study of numbers can be such a captivating pursuit. For Erdös the ultimate objective was to reproduce proofs from the Book. He believed that God (whom he called the Supreme Fascist) had written the Book, which contained a list of the most elegant answers to all mathematical questions. Even if mortals had proved a particular theorem, Erdös would not be satisfied unless it was a sufficiently beautiful proof, and would continue to search for the alternative, more aesthetic, proof, as written in the Book.

Ideally, a mathematical result should not be cast in terms of awkward prose, but rather it should be expressed in poetry. Right up until he died at the age of 83, just two hours after giving his last lecture, Erdös continued to work 19-hour days and publish 50 papers a year.

Now that he has gone there will be no more new members to the "Erdös Number 1 Club". Gian-Carlo Rota, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was once helped towards a proof by a hint from Erdös, but merely thanked him in the introduction to the published paper: "I will always regret not having included his name as a co-author. My Erdös number will now permanently remain equal to 2." However, Rota, and all other mathematicians, can take comfort from the notion that Erdös is now sat next to the Supreme Fascist, staring at the Book, reading the proofs he sought all his life.

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £11 contact CultureShop, see ad below

Survival among the snakes

Rachel Halliburton

The Artist's Widow
by Shena Mackay
Jonathan Cape 170pp £12.99

IF SHENA MACKAY were to win the Booker Prize, for which she was shortlisted two years ago, she would hate it. Such success would thrust her into a world portrayed in her latest novel as a nightmare of frenetic name-dropping, narcissistic self-ignorance, and people less worried about art than the length of their contact lists.

It is easy to see how this would be distasteful for a woman who is happiest when making surreal images dance out of descriptions of nature, portraying suburban grot, and conjuring her finest one-liners from the mouths of misfits. She has marked herself out as an idiosyncratic poet of human weakness, taking the reader from laughter one moment to awe at the beauty of her descriptions the next.

The publication of The Artist's Widow comes 34 years after Mackay first emerged on publishing lists with the novellas Dust Falls On Eugene Schlumburger and Toddler On The Run. Although the first novella was written when she was only 17, it already contained the hallmarks burning brightly in her latest book — humans transformed through comic metaphor into animals, obsession with death, and great sex for couples whose glamour is on a par with Norah Batty.

The Artist's Widow opens amid the jostle of would-be glitterati at a dead artist's final exhibition, viewed through the world-weary eyes of his widow, Lyris. Encounters between Nathan, her talentless artist nephew; Zoe, a beautiful but insensitive documentary maker; Clovis, a spineless neurotic bookseller; and herself, lead to events that feed on each individual's flaws and ultimately redeem most of them.

Death and loneliness perpetuate themselves, spectre-like through Mackay's work. They grope at the reader in her earlier novels, through vivid images summing up the anguish of isolation. In The Orchard On Fire, shortlisted for the Booker in 1996, she describes the old woman who "slept in the same bed as her dead husband for weeks, until they broke down the door and took him away". At the opening of The Artist's Widow, reality for Lyris is not in the champagne babble surrounding her, but below the earth with her husband for whom she feels a "pang of envy", lying there "among the flowers and berries of the crematorium gardens".

Comedy erupts instantly, however, as the guests wallowing in self-importance around her suddenly become a human jungle. A celebration of anthropomorphism in reverse ensues, as Louis, her husband's reptilian art-dealer, through draping his arm patronisingly across her shoulder, becomes like "a snake that a man had slung round her neck once in Tangiers", while Clovis the bookseller damns his former wife as "The Wounded Squid because she was so clinging and so easily hurt into squeezing her purple sentimental ink over everything."

It is the one weakness of The Artist's Widow that Mackay does not spend more time engaged in such flights of surreal reflection, or in the painterly descriptions that stake out her claims for genius. Much of the book's comedy revolves around Nathan, riddled with self-obsession and unable to turn anything but the chip on his shoulder into an art-form. Mackay's satire on his post-modern post-hope aspirations is often very funny, but there is a slightly stilted, almost clichéd quality to her observations.

A stitch in time

Nicholas Lezard

Timequake
by Kurt Vonnegut
Vintage 219pp £5.99



GET THIS: at least three of the five laudatory phrases on the back of this book, snipped from the original reviews, come from critics who were, to my knowledge, under 35 when the hardback came out. Kurt Vonnegut was in his seventies when he wrote it. As his irrepressible hero, Kilgore Trout, says throughout: ting-a-ling!

The premise of Timequake is that in the year 2001 the universe had a moment of self-doubt and contracted for a period, making everyone relive the last 10 years, to the last precise detail, thus relieving us of the dubious gift of free will. ("You can stuff it up your ass," says one aggrieved character at one point.) In the prologue Vonnegut claims to have spent nearly a decade writing a first version of this novel, "which did not work, which had no point, which had never wanted to be written in the first place. *Merde!*" He threw out all the bits that didn't work, and then knocked this one together in an easy hurry. So the macguffin of the timequake is really a metaphor for perseverance, wasted time, and perhaps time not so wasted after all. He doesn't spend too much time on the details of the timequake: what the book really is, as are so many of his books, is a higgledy-piggledy mix of rumination, autobiography, whimsy, family history, mass annihilation and corny, or even barely explicable jokes.

It works with the playful felicity, and facility, of the best kind of *spätwerk:* the poise between celebration and renunciation, between the positions of considering life "a crock of shit" and marvelling at human awareness, or soul, is what gives the novel its zest and spark, the playfulness that appeals to people a fraction his age. (Or using, as he did in Slaughterhouse 5, the phrase "so it goes" as a calming mantra, while at the same time being very concerned indeed at how things go or went.) That, and the quality it has of getting funnier as it progresses.

Naturally, works written late in an author's life accrue and project, deservedly or not, a sort of wisdom, and Vonnegut expresses it so genially that it is impossible to shake off. "This very summer, I asked the novelist William Styron in a Chinese restaurant how many people on the whole planet had what we had, which was lives worth living. Between the two of us, we came up with *17 per cent*." Or, my favourite, and one I can endorse from personal experience: "All male writers, incidentally, no matter how broke or otherwise objectionable, have pretty wives. Somebody should look into this."

Anyway, we should salute Vonnegut for giving us this, even if, as he suggests, he just tossed it off. It's not just his will that's free, but his mind. Timequake, both all over the place and perfectly fixed at the same time, is a sure-footed exemplar of the dictum that appears on page 191: "Listen: We are here on Earth to fart around. Don't let anybody tell you any different!"

Thrillers

Chris Petit

King Suckerman, by George P Pelecanos (Serpent's Tail, £8.99)

A BIG seventies flashback for the excellent Pelecanos, who starts with an impeccably executed drive-movie shooting, then dispatches a badass quartet on a killing spree that draws in a reluctant Vietnam vet running a Washington record store and his fence-sitting friend, a small-time dealer who has deferred the rites of passage for drifting through an evocative world of bars, dope, basketball and music, and is blind to coming changes, gradual and violent. Check the exemplary list of blaxploitation pix and soul for signs of God in the details — if Curtis Mayfield were a novel this would be it.

Damaged, by Simon Conway (Canongate, £9.99)

TOFFS turn bad in a convoluted but impressive debut about a big drug run — Afghan/Chechen connection, financed with stolen money, bound for Northern Ireland via Russian cargo boat and Catholic cross-border smuggler, to a Protestant buyer. The deal is masterminded by a badly wired army officer whose Scottish slacker cousin with literary ambitions along for the ride mistake. Conway delivers a sour and sprawling tale use and abuse, black economy, the darker emotions in a world without absolutes, with much authentic exhilaration in the face of violence and betrayal, and general relish upper crusts behaving like shits.

The Sinaloa Story, by Barry Gifford (Rebel Inc, £6.99)

GIFFORD'S rather beautiful weird and laconic tale of border passions, lawlessness and double locks a mechanic and a Mexican prostitute in a deadly dance and proceeds in staccato and surreal leaps as you would expect from a collaborator of David Lynch. Sweat, sex, exquisite and bizarre violence culminate in revolution south of the border, via all-too-disposable characters, who without Gifford's pared prose and cool appreciation would amount to nothing.

My Brother's Gun, by Ray Loriga (Rebel Inc, £6.99)

TEENAGE kill thrills: a gun, a girl, a car, petrol station shooting. Familiar mental and physical landscapes and iconography are reworked by Loriga, who returns to the classic French existential primer with laudable brevity. The media hoopla surrounding the fugitive couple provides narrative irony, but more memorable are the skewed atmosphere and deadpan tone: "When your brother kills someone, things can get pretty strange." But perhaps not strange enough.

When brains collide

Robin McKie

Great Feuds In Science: Ten of the Liveliest Disputes Ever
by Hal Hellman
John Wiley 240pp £19.99

ISAAC NEWTON always claimed that he had been able to see further, and that he had been able to unravel more of the universe's mysteries, because he had "stood on the shoulders of giants".

Apart from lifting the quote from the Bible, the great mathematician was also guilty of a slight terminal inexactitude. He didn't so much stand on people as trample all over them. Or at least that is how it must have seemed to the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. He thought he had developed the mathematical technique of calculus. He had, after all, published the first paper on the subject in 1684.

But Newton thought otherwise. He had worked out his own version the previous decade, he claimed, and just because he had neglected to publish it, this did not mean he was not the father of calculus. Convinced about the uniqueness of his own work, Newton set about demolishing Leibniz's reputation.

Some of Leibniz's colleagues hit back, and tirades of abuse were exchanged. In the end, Newton — who had assumed total, despotic control of the Royal Society — used Britain's leading scientific institution as a vehicle for traducing Leibniz. The latter died in 1716 and was buried "more like a robber than what he really was, the ornament of his country," wrote a friend. Newton, who died in 1727, was given a state funeral.

It makes great soap opera, but it is scarcely the stuff of high intellectual debate. Just consider the examples. In 1912 the world and his lab assistant joined together to lambast and deride the young German explorer Alfred Wegener when he proposed that continents were once joined together. Wegener was accused of being a fool. Today his theory of continental drift is accepted as a universal truth.

Then there was poor old Galileo, who was threatened with torture unless he renounced his ideas about the earth orbiting the sun; Richard Leakey and Donald Johanson have rowed bitterly on television over the origin of man; while Huxley excoriated Wilberforce in the debate over Darwin's theory of natural selection.

Scientific feuds have all the appeal of defrocked vicars and fallen nuns, men and women who are expected to rise above the gritty unpleasantness of everyday life, but who prove to be as weak as the rest of us. But Hellman is rather mealy-mouthed about the whole issue. Having set up the notion of a book about scientific discord, he then shies away from the dirt he scrapes up. There are allusions to various bad-mouthings, such as those of Newton and Leibniz, but precious little in the way of direct quotes.

It is all a bit soggy and lumpy. I yearned for a good hard-hitting scrap, and the sound of a well-aimed insult striking its target. Unfortunately, it is too well-balanced and fair for that — which is not something that could ever be said of its protagonists, after all.

Leakey: bitter rows over the origin of man — PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

Vernacular spectacular

Steven Poole

The Good Times
by James Kelman
Secker 246pp £14.99

JAMES KELMAN'S gorgeous new collection of short stories might well have the dumb, salivating philistines counting expletives again, as they did when denouncing his 1994 Booker-winning novel, How Late It Was, How Late. Naturally, such numeromaniacal critics are at liberty to take their pleasure where they can find it. This is, after all, exactly what Kelman's compellingly voiced characters are so skilful at doing. Meanwhile one constant aim of Kelman's language is probably to deconstruct sanitary discriminations of literary register as being a class-based prejudice: this is why a character in his new book can move organically from a wittily clever analysis of media sales techniques to the splendid punchline: "The powers-that-be are fuckpigs."

The Good Times contains 20 first-person narratives by men and boys suffering the industrial wastes of suburban Glasgow while dreaming of far-off lands, labouring in dead-end jobs or ardently hoping for even a dead-end opportunity, failing to communicate with their wives and girlfriends or just dreaming of an opportunity to fail. Poverty lurks constantly below the surface: "I had a fag and we smoked it"; the spectre of an unbought round of pints glowers over a time-wasting pub conversation.

Such little things please large minds: Kelman's working-class characters are intellectually sophisticated and curious, often near-drunk on the transformative power of literature. A gardener reads German phenomenology in the van; a lovelorn youth copies out passages from books and sticks them to the wall. And one of the finest stories, "Comic Cuts", a rollicking account of a post-pub conversation between a group of musicians, can be read as a sly reworking of Plato's Symposium.

Books also represent the possibility of physical escape, and models of heroic roles that can exoticise the quotidian: the characters often indulge in intellectually salacious imaginings of foreign lands. A man venturing out into the icy Scottish winter to buy bread and milk imagines himself to be an Arctic trapper hunting meat; other men comparably dream of China or Australia. In low moments Kelman's characters try to derive comfort from their very insignificance. A man gazing out to sea, in a story that bristles with a Carver-esque texture of unspoken marital chasms, reflects: "It had nothing to do with me. It really did not have anything to do with me."

But what finally gives Kelman's fiercely loving and exquisitely constructed short stories their surprising, governing character of optimism is a faith in ideas. If a character occasionally wonders "How can anything be said?", it is only as part of a continuing torrent of searching eloquence. And the Hegel-loving young gardener is baffled when his elderly colleague, Sidney, takes a careful shot at his romanticism.

"See that ancient auld tree round the back, the weeping willow, the one that's gigantic as fuck?"

"The one that's full of flies, bees, spiders, moths and butterflies, aye, so what?"

"It's no full of goblins son, ken what I'm saying?" Sidney is just trying to protect his young friend from disillusionment, but in the end, Kelman is passionately on the side of the goblins.

Government by ghouls

Ian Thomson

The Land of Green Plums
by Herta Müller, trans Michael Hofmann
Granta 242pp £9.99

THE memory of this bitter novel sticks like a fishbone in the throat. The Land Of Green Plums unfolds in Ceausescu's Romania with its atmosphere of shadowy fear. This is the story of a group of students who try — but fail — to overcome the totalitarian darkness. In a dictatorship that has eroded all humanity, resistance was hopeless. A powerful autobiographical account, The Land Of Green Plums has won the richest literary prize in the world — the $165,000 Irish Impac award.

The author, Herta Müller, was born in Romania's German-speaking region of Banat. Burdened by their German heredity, the students in her novel reject their parents' Nazi past as well as Ceausescu's cruel misrule. Müller, aged 45, is the daughter of an SS veteran and she provides a memorably vicious portrait of her Führer-doting father. An alcoholic, he laments a lost idyll of plum brandy, strudel pastry and beer-swilling Herrenvolk. Nazi Romania had much in common with Ceausescu's, notably a dewy-eyed nationalism. Under Ceausescu all literature had to be slavishly socialist-realist.

However, Müller finds a surreal melancholy in her country's disintegration. High-heeled shoes, apparently more alive than their owners, seem to walk by themselves in a scruffy park. And every morning buses drive through the city with their grey curtains drawn. Inside, cowed and manacled, dissidents are being herded to the construction sites. Five students recite banned folk poetry and sneak photographs of the buses. One of them, Lola, falls irresistibly for an influential party member. When Lola's love becomes an encumbrance to him, the secret police exert their special terror. A few days later Lola is found hanging in a wardrobe. Suicide? Her classmates, Edgar, Georg, Kurt and the narrator, suspect that she was murdered. Müller herself was a casualty of the Securitate's psychological violence and lost her job as a teacher. Her superbly chilling portrait of the Ceausescu stooge Captain Pjele is surely drawn from experience. With his alley rat's cunning, Pjele eventually charges the students with subversive activities and parasitism. He ensures that they are banished to various soul-destroying jobs. The narrator ends up in a factory translating instructions for hydraulic machinery.

When one of the students, Georg, successfully applies to leave Romania, he is hounded by the Securitate abroad. Finally, maddened by their surveillance, he jumps to his death from a Frankfurt hostel. The narrator's own application to emigrate is approved and she flees to Berlin. But Ceausescu's shadow is long and unforgiving. She is unsettled to receive a visit from her Romanian colleague Tereza. In a shocking incident, Tereza is exposed as the emissary of Captain Pjele. The best friend had been contaminated by the regime.

Müller's sombre fiction was first smuggled out to the West in the early eighties and this startlingly original book was published in Germany six years ago. The Land Of Green Plums is a harsh, raw novel with an undertow of melancholy, and she weaves her tale of oppression with a deft economy of words. "No cities can grow in a dictatorship, because everything stays small when it's watched," she writes grimly. This book will linger on in the mind, and Michael Hofmann's translation is a marvel.



Cycling Tour de France

Pantani victory tainted by doping scandal

Paul Webster in Paris

THROUGH the late afternoon rain clouds, a weak sun shone as the 85th Tour de France ended last Sunday — the only bright spot in the three-week event in which the overall winner, Marco Pantani of Italy, took second place to a scandal over drug use.

Heavy rain had soaked the Champs-Elysées and left a greasy sheen on the cobbles as the cyclists started the final circuits watched by a smaller than average crowd, their subdued mood a striking contrast to the fiesta on the same avenue that greeted France's World Cup football win last month.

There were nervous moments as the *peloton* negotiated the dead turn at the Arc de Triomphe with the utmost caution. Both Pantani and the Frenchman who finished fourth overall, Christophe Rinero, punctured but made their way back to the bunch.

While race organisers congratulated the first Italian winner of the race for 33 years, conversation at the downbeat closing ceremony concentrated on whether the tour would go ahead next year. Several non-French teams, rattled by police investigations and frustrated by riders' strikes, say they will not take part next July in what the press has labelled the "Tour de Farce".

Their example is being followed by several sponsors, who spend more than $3 million to back leading teams. Police have hinted that a number of riders are ready to act as informers after the race, while some end-of-season competitions have been cancelled because more raids are coming. Sports writers did their best to re-inject enthusiasm into the shattered competition, but the most significant post-race analysis was carried out by sports doctors, shocked by the growing use of dangerous drugs that directly or indirectly forced seven of the 21 teams to pull out of the race.

An Italian racer, Rodolfo Massi, was arrested for alleged drug dealing, and other top riders and team managers have been detained and interrogated.

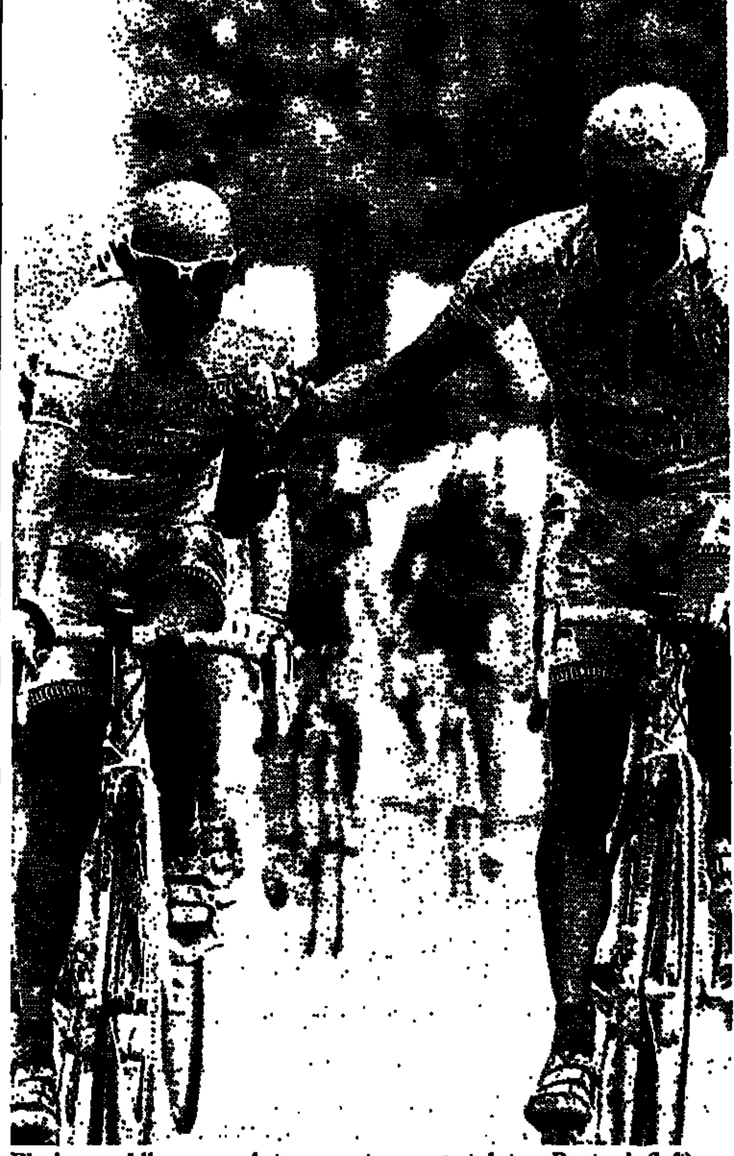
Calls for a radical overhaul were supported by the former European Commission president, Jacques Delors, who urged strict new regulations to ensure that "neither cash nor miracle cures pollute the vast sporting world".

A terrifying picture of competitors being crippled, or even killed, by drugs now in use throughout professional and amateur cycling was revealed by Gerard Nicolet, a member of the French Cycling Federation's executive and a former chief doctor to the tour.

"The practice has become generalised and very worrying," he said, adding that the French federation had issued a full-scale doping alert a year ago. "Among amateur riders, the idea that drugs are essential to reach a high level is now well anchored. They say they have no choice even for a little village race."

Drug-related cases of heart problems, thrombosis, hepatitis, chest diseases and strokes had been diagnosed and he was certain that there had been several unreported deaths in the past two or three years. A new substance called perfluorocarbon, PFC, was being produced in the United States, despite warnings that it was "terribly dangerous".

Police intend to question the chairman of the French Cycling Federation, Daniel Baal, and the managing director of the Tour de France, Jean-Marie Leblanc, over concerns that cycling executives might have turned a blind eye to practices dating back at least 30 years.



Blazing saddles . . . A team-mate congratulates Pantani (left) on winning the Tour de France last Sunday PHOTO: LAURENT REBOURS

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Test hero Atherton is in the mood for runs

MIKE ATHERTON took his Test form from Trent Bridge to the county arena at Old Trafford where he steered Lancashire to a six-wicket victory over Nottinghamshire in the quarter-finals of the NatWest Trophy.

Batting just hours after his lengthy, unbeaten 98 for England against South Africa, Atherton showed no sign of fatigue as he notched up another 76 runs to set up the win. His opening stand of 96 with Mark Chilton proved crucial and earned him the man of the match award. Earlier, Glen Chapple took 5-85 to restrict Nottinghamshire to 249-9.

Lancashire's opponents in the semi-final will be Hampshire, who romped to a 144-run win over Middlesex at Lord's. The visitors amassed 295-5, with man of the match Adrian Aymes unbeaten on 73, and Giles White contributing a gritty 69. Middlesex were never in the hunt, despite a brave 57 from opener Justin Langer.

Warwickshire, winners of three out of the four top-class competitions in 1994, are a team in decline this season. Their last realistic hope of a trophy disappeared with a calamitous batting display. They crumbled to 98 all out against Leicestershire at Grace Road — their lowest total in 36 years of the 60-overs competition. Pace bowler Alan Mullally took 5-18 and Chris Lewis 3-25. The home side reduced the visitors to 19-4, and once captain Brian Lara fell for 14 there was no way back for his side. Leicestershire rattled up the runs for the loss of only two wickets, with nearly 24 overs to spare. Derbyshire now stand in their way of a second Lord's final of the season and the chance to put behind them their 192-run humiliation by Essex in the Benson & Hedges Cup final.

Derbyshire inflicted a five-wicket defeat on County Championship leaders Surrey at The Oval, thanks to an all-round display by veteran Kim Barnett. The county's former captain claimed the wickets of both Ally Brown and Adam Hollioake as Surrey were restricted to 217-7. Barnett then hit 60 in an opening stand of 162 with Michael Slater, before Dominic Cork and Karl Krikken sealed the victory.

ENGLAND have named an unchanged squad for the final Test against South Africa at Headingley. After England's triumph at Trent Bridge, which levelled the series, there is great interest in the decider, and advanced ticket sales had netted $1.6 million by last Sunday. The England 12 are: Stewart, Atherton, Butcher, Cork, Flintoff, Fraser, Gough, Hick, Hussain, Mullally, Ramprakash and Salisbury.

SHANE WARNE, whose now legendary spin bowling has brought him a haul of 313 Test wickets, effectively ruled himself out of next winter's Ashes series against England, and expressed fears that he may never bowl again. Warne, who underwent major surgery on his shoulder in May, said in Melbourne: "Surgeons have said there is a slim chance that I might not play again."

GRAHAM HENRY, the Auckland and New Zealand A coach, has been hired to revive the ailing Welsh rugby union side — their eighth national coach in 10 years. The 53-year-old Henry has signed a five-year contract with the Welsh Rugby Union at an annual salary of more than $400,000, even though he had been warned by the New Zealand Rugby Football Union that he would never coach the All Blacks if he allied himself with another nation.

Henry was the pretender to the throne of current New Zealand coach John Hart, whose position has become less secure with Tri-Nations defeats by both Australia and South Africa.

ROGER BLACK, hoping to end his brilliant athletics career with a record third European Championship gold medal for 400 metres in Budapest next month, instead bowed out before a roomful of journalists in London last week. The 32-year-old 1996 Olympic silver medallist announced his retirement after being overlooked for an individual 400-metre spot in the squad for Hungary.

THE football season kicked off in Scotland with Celtic beginning the defence of their Premiership title in style. They beat Dunfermline 5-0, Craig Burley claiming a hat-trick and Simon Donnelly and Malky Mackay chipping in with a goal each. Hearts grabbed two goals in the first 20 minutes against Rangers, but conceded one before half-time — and that's how the game ended. Aberdeen beat Dundee 2-0 while Kilmarnock defeated Dundee United by the same margin.

A STAGGERING $100 million — that's the value Liverpool have put on teenage sensation Michael Owen, for insurance purposes. The club want to cover the England World Cup star against loss through injury, accident or illness. The figure is higher than the cover for any Premiership player — and also eclipses the $80 million insurance umbrella for Internazionale's Brazilian striker Ronaldo. The hunt is now on to find an insurance company to provide the cover.

Rugby Union

All Blacks face clear-out for World Cup

Greg Growden in Christchurch

THE All Black coach John Hart has indicated that at least four of New Zealand's best known players will miss next year's World Cup after his team's third consecutive defeat.

Hart, a coach not accustomed to losing one Test, let alone three in a row, said New Zealand's abysmal performance in losing the Bledisloe Cup by 23-27 to Australia at Lancaster Park last Saturday had forced him to rethink his World Cup planning.

Several All Black regulars, including the prop Craig Dowd, the locks Robin Brooke and Ian Jones, the flanker Michael Jones, the centre Walter Little and even the scrum-half Justin Marshall will be struggling to hold on to their spots for New Zealand's next Tri-Nations match against South Africa in Durban next week.

Hart surprisingly brought the bulk of the squad to the media conference after the match, and to explain that the blame for the defeat had to be shared by the players as well as the coaching staff.

"We have decided we are now building to the World Cup, and our next two Tests will be the start of that campaign," Hart said. "Some of the players we thought might be going to the World Cup might now not be going. It is going to be a difficult call but this is a really dark time."

Meanwhile Australia celebrated one of their most special Test victories, with the Australian Rugby Union chief executive John O'Neill proclaiming in the Wallabies dressing-room: "I have just witnessed the silence of the lambs."

The Australian players were savouring a rare sporting moment — their first win in Christchurch in 40 years, the first time Australia had won the Bledisloe Cup on New Zealand soil since 1986, and their first victory on this side of the Tasman since 1990.

"A lot of the guys in the team didn't know what it was like to win here," said John Eales, Australia's captain. "We will certainly enjoy this occasion."

The Australian coach Rod Macqueen freely admitted to having a tear in his eye, and the veteran centre Tim Horan [illegible] the victory as being as special for him as his involvement [illegible] 1991 World Cup winning [illegible]

This was one of the greatest performances by an Australian team in New Zealand. Their defence was first-rate, their composure under pressure was crucial, and their attacking [illegible] always came at the right time, enabling them to score four [illegible] for a crucial bonus point which keeps their Tri-Nations series hopes alive.

The victor of the Tri-Nations will now be decided by the [illegible] series match between Australia and South Africa in Johannesburg on August 22.

Motor Racing German Grand Prix

Hakkinen turns up the heat on Ferrari

Alan Henry at Hockenheim

MIKA HAKKINEN and David Coulthard left Ferrari trailing for a second successive weekend when they delivered another display of McLaren-Mercedes superiority in Germany last Sunday.

Hakkinen's second win in seven days coincided with the announcement that the two drivers would be staying with McLaren until the end of 1999. "We are happy with what they have done for us and believe they are both capable of being world champion," Mercedes' director at the race, Jürgen Hubbert, said.

This was McLaren's sixth one-two in 12 races, including the final rounds of last year's championship, and saw Hakkinen go 16 points clear of Michael Schumacher at the head of the drivers' standings. The German's Ferrari could finish no better than fifth after problems with the handling balance at speed.

Third place went to Jacques Villeneuve's Williams ahead of Damon Hill, who scored the first points of his season in the Jordan-Mugen Honda. "I got into a good groove and kept pushing the entire distance," said Hill.

It was the first time a Mercedes-engined Formula One car had won on German soil since the legendary Juan-Manuel Fangio triumphed at the Nürburgring in 1954, and it represented another giant stride towards Hakkinen becoming only the second Finnish world champion since his manager Keke Rosberg won the title in a Williams 16 years ago. Coulthard ran steadily in the wheeltracks of the other McLaren to repeat the one-two of the Austrian Grand Prix at the beginning of the month.

Both McLaren drivers were worried about the challenge posed by Villeneuve in the closing stages of the race. Hakkinen had eased his pace when his engine refused to pull as strongly as it should have done, causing Coulthard in turn to ease back slightly. Although the leading McLaren trailed an ominous haze of liquid which laid an opaque film across Coulthard's visor, the loss in performance was caused by Hakkinen leaning off the fuel mixture to make it less rich, under instructions from his engineers.

"At one point we were slightly worried that Mika's car had not taken on its full fuel allocation at the pit stop," said the McLaren managing director Ron Dennis.

"Even though we then checked our figures and convinced ourselves that this was not in fact the case, we played safe by adjusting the mixture to run as economically as possible."

Because of this, Villeneuve trimmed Hakkinen's advantage from 5.1 seconds on lap 33 to 2.1 seconds on lap 36, only for the McLarens to pick up the pace again. Coulthard drove defensively as they lapped slower traffic, protecting Hakkinen by dropping back to ensure there was a back marker between himself and Villeneuve.

"Once you get to within a second or so of another car, you are into too much turbulence," said Coulthard, "so I thought there was too much at stake to try passing Mika. But I was seriously worried about Jacques because I know he is a committed driver and, if he sees half a gap, he will go for it. It was uncomfortable."

Towards the end Villeneuve's challenge was blunted when he dropped away with an apparent transmission problem. "I suddenly picked up a lot of wheelspin on the inside rear wheel," he reported. "The revs were rising but the car was going no faster. It could have been something to do with the clutch or the differential."

This was the world champion's best performance of the season and his first visit to the rostrum since clinching his title with third place in last year's final European grand prix at Jerez.

The Schumacher brothers completed the top six behind Hill, Michael's Ferrari heading Ralf's Jordan past the chequered flag.

● Two spectators, one a seven-year-old child, were killed at a high-speed corner during a rally in Madeira after being hit by a car driven by the Portuguese champion Adruzilio Lopes.

Mika Hakkinen crosses the line ahead of his team-mate David Coulthard PHOTO: OLIVER MULTHAUP

Golf Scandinavian Masters

Parnevik holds off Clarke

Gordon Richardson in Stockholm

THE expectant father Darren Clarke delivered three birdies in the home straight in last Sunday's Scandinavian Masters here at Kungsangen, but they failed to prevent Jesper Parnevik from galloping to victory.

Despite being preoccupied by thoughts of his wife Heather, who had entered hospital to prepare for the birth of their first child, the Ulsterman produced a bold effort that would have put the squeeze on most opponents.

He twice sank 25-footers for threes but Parnevik was giving nothing away and produced immediate replies, rolling in a 25-footer for a two at the 12th before coaxing in a 10-footer to match Clarke's second successive birdie at the 15th.

When the powerful Ulsterman's tee-shot at the short 16th drifted close to a water hazard and cost him four it was case closed. Parnevik could afford the luxury of a bogey five after a bunkered approach to the last, finally winning by three strokes with a 70 for an 11-under-par total of 273.

It was Clarke's second successive second place, following the Dutch Open, and a pair of $145,000 cheques have lifted him above Colin Montgomerie ($725,000) into second place in the European money list with $775,000. Lee Westwood heads the list with $970,000.

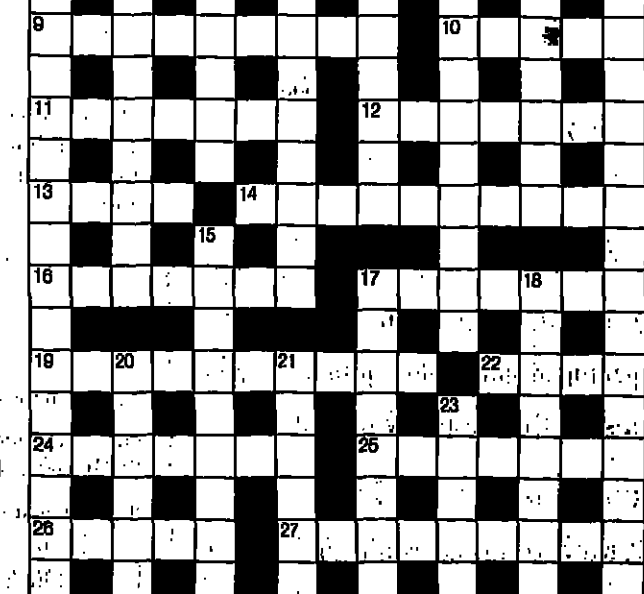
Clarke hopes it will be a case of third time lucky in the US PGA Championship in Seattle, which begins on August 13. Before boarding a specially hired jet back to Belfast to be with his wife, Clarke admitted that his Ryder Cup team-mate Parnevik fully deserved his second victory in four years in this event.

But Parnevik said that the pressure of winning in front of a home crowd, which numbered 29,000, was not easy to handle.

"They want you to win and they expect you to win," he said. "The one negative thing about the victory is that I've lost confidence with the putter. I had 37 putts today and it's something I must sort out before the US PGA."

Parnevik . . . feeling the pressure

Cryptic crossword by Rufus



Across

9 Musical production turned into theatrical work (9)
10 Source of wild laughter (5)
11 Bill given by a retailer? (7)
12 Slushy product made by Mother with a whisk, perhaps (7)
13 I make an offer in place of a previous quotation (4)
14 Understanding it's becoming popular (8,2)
16 Do not notice the lack of proper care (7)
17 Chasing a double century I hit out and get it (7)
19 Just inclined to like blondes? (4-6)
22 Smart fellow the French take into 11 across (4)
24 Sporting official may help us get a job (7)
25 Stumble on crude oil in North Africa (7)
26 Writer goes to the Church for money (5)
27 Put down the going price as a basis for taxation (4,5)

Down

1 Revolutionary system for increasing the harvest (8,2,5)
2 Realising it's delightful (8)
3 Churned up mud at the starting line (5)
4 Absent-minded girl's distinguishing feature (8)
5 Consisting of wise sayings of Zurich bankers? (6)
6 A bit of entertainment worth seeing? (9)
7 We sign for some housework (6)
8 They were places to change for the Brighton Belle (7,8)
15 It's a card-game, of course (9)
17 Warning of integral changes (8)
18 A College of nobodies? (3,5)
20 First-class student? (6)
21 Jabber and annoy (6)
23 Riddle — what was the craft of the Jumblies? (5)

Last week's solution